PATHFINDER®
PLAYTEST™
DOOMSDAY
DAWN

DOOMSDAY DAWN LOCATIONS
Undarin
(Chapter 5)
Sombrefell Hall
(Chapter 3)
Thicketfell
(Chapter 4)
Magnimar
(Chapter 1)
Valley of the Pyramids
(Chapter 7)
Pale Mountain
(Chapter 2)
The Smoker
(Chapter 6)
0
Miles
400

CREDITS
Development Leads • Logan Bonner, Adam Daigle, and James Jacobs
Authors • Logan Bonner, Jason Bulmahn, James Jacobs, Amanda Hamon Kunz, Stephen Radney-MacFarland, and Mark Seifter
Editors • Judy Bauer, Christopher Carey, James Case, Simone Dietzler, Leo Glass, Avi Kool, Lyz Liddell, Erik Mona, Adrian Ng, Lacy Pellazar, and Jason Tondro
Graphic Designers • Sonja Morris and Sarah Robinson
Cover Artist • Setiawan Lie
Interior Artists • Cynthia F.G., Taylor Fischer, Federico Musetti, Mikhail Palamarchuk, Roberto Pitturru, Kiki Moch Rizky, and Firat Solhan
Cartographers • Jason Engle and Robert Lazzaretti

PAIZO EDITORIAL
Creative Management • James Jacobs, Robert G. McCreary, Erik Mona, Mark Moreland, Sarah Robinson, and Gabriel Waluconis
Design • Logan Bonner, Jason Bulmahn, Stephen Radney-MacFarland, Mark Seifter, and Owen K.C. Stephens
Development • John Compton, Adam Daigle, Eleanor Ferron, Crystal Frasier, Thurston Hillman, Jason Keeley, Amanda Hamon Kunz, Luis Loza, Ron Lundeen, Joe Pasini, Michael Sayre, Chris Sims, and Linda Zayas-Palmer
Editing • Judy Bauer, Christopher Carey, James Case, Leo Glass, Lyz Liddell, Adrian Ng, Lacy Pellazar, and Jason Tondro
Graphic Design • Emily Crowell, Sonja Morris, and Adam Vick

PAIZO INCORPORATED
Executive • Jeffery Alvarez, John Parrish, Erik Mona, Lisa Stevens, and Vic Wertz
Customer Service • Sharaya Copas, Katina Davis, Sara Marie, Samantha Phelan, and Diego Valdez
Finance • Christopher Caldwell, and B. Scott Keim
Licensing and Marketing • Jim Butler, Glenn Elliott, Aaron Shanks, and Dan Tharp
Organized Play • Tonya Woldridge
Sales • Cosmo Eisele and Pierce Watters
Technology • Brian Bauman, Robert Brandenburg, Whitney Chatterjee, Lissa Guillet, Erik Keith, Chris Lambertz, Dean Ludwig, Gary Teter, and Andrew White
Warehouse • Laura Wilkes Carey, Will Chase, Mika Hawkins, Heather Payne, Jeff Strand, and Kevin Underwood
Webstore • Rick Kunz

ON THE COVER

Seoni and Harsk find that more than dust and lost lore lurk within these ancient ruins as two mummies animate and attack, in this dynamic cover art by Setiawan Lie!

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Paizo Inc.
7120 185th Ave NE, Ste 120
Redmond, WA 98052-0577

paizo.com

Printed in Canada.

OVERVIEW

In 4718 AR—later this year—a rare planetary conjunction, in combination with the power of ancient artifacts erected in the desert kingdom of Osirion thousands of years ago, will create a massive portal between Golarion and the hostile planet of Aucturn, at the far edge of the solar system. If this portal appears, it will allow the ravenous aliens of the Dominion of the Black to harvest brains from the peoples of the Inner Sea region on a devastating scale and provide an opportunity for a nascent entity of great power awakening from eons-long gestation to feast upon the world of Golarion. Fortunately, hints of this imminent apocalypse have emerged from the sands of time over the past decade, affording a desperate chance to avert this doom. These hints and clues have become known as the Aucturn Enigma, and unless multiple groups of heroes rise to the challenge of opposing this catastrophe, it could destroy one world forever while simultaneously creating another.

PLAYTEST FEEDBACK

Doomsday Dawn is designed to test the newest edition of the Pathfinder Roleplaying Game, focusing on combat encounters, exploration, hazards, and problem-solving. The goals are to create a fundamental understanding of the game and to test if the revisions to the rules still allow for the same types of storytelling and adventure roleplaying that everyone has come to expect from Pathfinder.

How to Give Feedback

For each chapter in this adventure, we ask that the players and GM alike fill out surveys. You can find links to these surveys at **paizo.com/pathfinderplaytest.** Make sure you are familiar with the contents of each survey before beginning play, because in some cases you'll be asked to track certain metrics, such as "At what point did the group run out of healing resources?" or "How many times did player characters die?"

ADJUSTING ENCOUNTERS

Pathfinder assumes that the typical group consists of a Game Master and four players, but often a Game Master will find that the number of players interested in her game doesn't always align with this expectation. Rules for adjusting encounters according to the number of players can be found in the *Pathfinder Playtest Bestiary*.

CHARACTER BACKGROUNDS

During character creation, players each select a background for their characters. The *Pathfinder Playtest Rulebook* presents a variety of backgrounds that can be used for any type of character, but for Adventure Paths and other significant adventures, we'll be providing campaign-specific backgrounds players can choose from to help their characters more directly fit into the campaign's plotline.

In *Doomsday Dawn*, players must select from the following unique character backgrounds while creating characters for "The Lost Star." See pages 38–39 of the *Pathfinder Playtest Rulebook* for more on backgrounds.

BUDDING OSIRIONOLOGIST — BACKGROUND

The secrets buried in the seemingly endless sands of the nation of Osirion have long intrigued you, even though you've never actually visited the nation. Some day, you hope to correct that.

Choose two ability boosts. One must be to Dexterity or Intelligence, and one is a free ability boost.

You gain the Terrain Stalker (rubble) feat, and you're trained in the Ancient Osirion Lore skill.

ESOTERIC SCION — BACKGROUND

One of your family members belongs to a semisecret society called the Esoteric Order of the Palatine Eye. You've long held an interest in perhaps some day joining the order and have studied strange topics in preparation for that day.

Choose two ability boosts. One must be to Intelligence or Wisdom, and one is a free ability boost.

You gain the Quick Identification feat, and you're trained in the Esoteric Order Lore skill.

KEY TERMS

Doomsday Dawn uses the following groups and terms, as defined below.

Dark Tapestry: This is the term used to refer to the dark spaces between the stars where alien monstrosities lurk.

Dominion of the Black: This is a conglomeration of galaxy-spanning, malevolent aliens.

Esoteric Order of the Palatine Eye: This semisecret society studies the occult, especially Osirionology, which led it to discover the plot of the Dominion of the Black.

FAMILY FRIEND — BACKGROUND

Your family has been friends with the Deverins of Magnimar for a generation, and you've grown accustomed to hobnobbing with the aristocracy even if you have little or no interest in such matters.

Choose two ability boosts. One must be to Charisma or Intelligence, and one is a free ability boost.

You gain the Hobnobber feat, and you're trained in the Nobility Lore skill.

GOBLIN RENEGADE — BACKGROUND

You had been working with a gang of goblin burglars, but that new leader was no good. It took a lot of guts to stand up to him, but you survived! Now you're stuck with the longshanks, but maybe you can get back at the old boss.

Choose two ability boosts. One must be to Dexterity or Charisma, and one is a free ability boost.

You gain the Quick Repair feat, and you're trained in the Criminal Lore skill.

MIND QUAKE SURVIVOR — BACKGROUND

As a child, you once woke from a particularly harrowing nightmare, and this nightmare has plagued you ever since. You've had strange thoughts and knowledge that you always felt weren't truly your own.

Choose two ability boosts. One must be to Constitution or Wisdom, and one is a free ability boost.

You gain the Dubious Knowledge feat, and you're trained in the Dominion of the Black Lore skill.

PATHFINDER HOPEFUL — BACKGROUND

You've long wanted to join the adventurous Pathfinder Society, a world-spanning organization of relic hunters. This aspiration has led you to take up the dangerous life of an adventurer eager to make a name for yourself and gain the attention of the Pathfinder Society.

Choose two ability boosts. One must be to Strength or Intelligence, and one is a free ability boost.

You gain the Additional Lore feat, and you're trained in the Pathfinder Society Lore skill.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

In –4363 AR, the Rain of Stars brought devastation to Golarion. A starship from a distant galaxy broke apart overhead and crashed in Numeria—then a savage land of superstitious barbarians—bringing with it the attention of the Dominion of the Black, powerful and entitled aliens ruling over vast realms of stars and voids unimaginably distant from Golarion.

While most of the Dominion of the Black remained hidden within the Dark Tapestry in those ancient days, the madness-inducing technology that the Dominion had used to doom the starship persisted for millennia after the crash. In –3116 AR, a Numerian warlord triggered a powerful explosion while exploring a ruined fragment of the crashed starship. The detonation wiped out his entire clan and unleashed a long-dormant Dominion weapon. In the aftermath of the explosion, and for millennia afterward, dozens of the native Kellids across Numeria and beyond were afflicted with mind quakes—overwhelming visions of alien thoughts, incomprehensible science, and unknowable emotions. Most who suffered these mind quakes were driven to desperate acts of murder that ended in their own deaths, save for one man: Ramlock, a priest of Desna, goddess of dreams, luck, stars, and travelers.

Ramlock was struck with his mind quake centuries after the initial explosion, and he resisted its effects long enough to lock himself in a cavern below his sect's sacred standing stones. His fellow priests brought him food and water but were forbidden from releasing him. Secured away, Ramlock wrestled nightly for months with the alien lore in his brain, scratching equations, notes, and theories into the stone walls. Then, one night many weeks after his mind quake, Ramlock seemed to spontaneously recover. He convinced his fellow priests he had recuperated, and they released him—only to discover too late that Ramlock had been utterly changed. In his fervor to decipher the mind quake, he had expunged his ability to reason into the equations in the walls, and the Ramlock who emerged from the stone chamber below was a remorseless monster. He murdered the priests who had cared for him and freed him, and then he fled the region before his tribe could rise up against him.

RAMLOCK'S STUDIES

His worship of Desna a thing of the past, Ramlock eventually settled far to the east of his original home where he found a new calling in wizardry. There he authored a tome called *The Last Theorem*—a dangerous treatise on Dominion culture, philosophy, and science disguised as a discussion of mathematics and numerology. Ramlock hoped to master the complex thoughts that infected his mind, and while he came close, he was never able to unlock these mysteries. He became convinced that the key to comprehending the alien knowledge in his head was a theoretical axiom he simply couldn't grasp. Ramlock called this unattainable truth the White Axiom, and with *The Last Theorem* as complete as he could make it, he turned his attention toward seeking out the White Axiom.

JOURNEY TO OSIRION

Ramlock abandoned Avistan, the northern continent in the Inner Sea region, entirely. To the south, a new god of magic had risen, and strong traditions of arcane experimentation had entered a golden age; Ramlock traveled there in hopes of learning more. In Osirion, he flourished and his skill at wizardry grew by leaps and bounds, yet still the White Axiom eluded him. He grew increasingly obsessed with contacting the Dominion of the Black, believing—incorrectly—that his original mind quake had been an incomplete gift, and that by reestablishing communication with the Dominion, he could learn the White Axiom. He focused his study on the stars, and on the mysterious and sinister planet of Aucturn in particular.

Ramlock was initially regarded as a strange northern curiosity by his Osirian peers, but as the outré nature of his experiments and research became apparent, he increasingly found his presence unwelcome in society. Frustrated and outcast, Ramlock had begun considering a move even farther south to start fresh a third time when he was approached by four ascending pharaohs who had set aside their squabbles to form a pact. Known as the Four Pharaohs of Ascension, these pharaohs were intrigued by Ramlock's skill at arcana, and they promised to aid him in creating a place he could call his home if he promised that this secret realm could also be used, in time, for the Four Pharaohs' tomb.

Ramlock agreed, and he began his task in a remote valley. When preparations were complete, Ramlock performed a mighty ritual to create a demiplane of eternally twilit desert—his Hallow. Within, he created a towering pyramid of strange green stone drawn from Numeria called veinstone. This pyramid, which would someday serve the Four Pharaohs as a site for their tomb, formed a monumental roof over Ramlock's workshop.

THE TRANSFORMATION

Ramlock spent the bulk of his remaining years in the Hallow, exiting only rarely to secure funds or rare components from the Four Pharaohs, who themselves had risen to seize power in Osirion. Eventually, Ramlock had an epiphany: he concluded that chasing the White Axiom was merely a distraction and that what truly kept him from fully comprehending the lore imparted by his mind quake was nothing less than his humanity.

And so Ramlock began his final quest—to transform himself, realizing that the very structure of the human brain was, Ramlock believed, his greatest flaw. Aucturn became the focus of Ramlock's new obsession. The more he studied what sparse lore existed about the strange world, the more he grew to believe that if he could but reach the distant planet, he could entomb himself there and, over time, ascend from humanity into something greater.

Ramlock's final work was the creation of the *Veinstone Pendulum*, a potent magical device within his workshop in the Hallow that, once set in motion, would synchronize itself to the cycle of conjunctions between Golarion, Aucturn, and the sun. Once completed and activated and upon the next conjunction, the *Veinstone Pendulum* would open a portal to Aucturn that would not only transport Ramlock to the distant world but also begin the transformation of his physical body into something new. On the predicted date, Ramlock vanished from Golarion, leaving behind an apocalyptic legacy and unaware that the majority of his work had, in fact, been watched and encouraged from afar.

What Ramlock thought was merely a personal-use portal powered by the harmonic planetary energies of a conjunction was more akin to a magical capacitor. Every 56 years, when the conjunction between Aucturn and Golarion recurred, the magical power inside the *Veinstone Pendulum* grew. Upon the 111th conjunction in 4718 AR, the magical energy will finally overload the portal and cause the two planets to merge—a catastrophic process that will destroy Golarion and allow Aucturn to awaken as a Great Old One.

In time, the Four Pharaohs built four pyramids around where Ramlock had created his Hallow. By using a golden funeral mask, the pharaohs could phase their Veinstone Pyramid tomb out of the Hallow and into Golarion. As they prepared the tomb, they found that Ramlock had abandoned the Hallow. The four claimed as their own the treasures Ramlock left behind in the pyramid, though they never learned of the hidden workshop below. They also didn't know of *The Last Theorem*, which was hidden in a different site of power called the Pact Stone Pyramid. When the Four perished, they were interred in the Veinstone Pyramid, which then phased back into the Hallow to ensure their treasures would remain safe. With the passing of time, all knowledge of Ramlock's legacy, his demiplane, *The Last Theorem*, and the encroaching doom may well have remained hidden until it was too late. But in 4707 AR, a group of adventurers rediscovered both Ramlock's Hallow and *The Last Theorem*, giving Golarion a last-minute chance to avert a horrific doom.

Ramlock still lives on distant Aucturn and has yet to uncover the truth of the White Axiom: this missing fragment was in fact the ability to reason that he lost when he suffered the initial mind quake that set him on his life's sinister work. This fragment of reason exists still, trapped in the ruins of his first home in lost Sarkoris, a land since consumed by an interplanar rift called the Worldwound. If it can be harnessed and recovered, the White Axiom can serve as the key to unlocking the true potential of *The Last Theorem*—the only thing that can halt the final swings of the *Veinstone Pendulum* before it can awaken one world and end another!

RAMLOCK

THE LOST STAR

In 4651 AR, a Chelish scholar named Imivus became fascinated by the history of Ancient Osirion, a fascination that swiftly grew to an obsession after Osirion's government denied him permission to mount an expedition into the desert sands. Frustrated and with wounded pride, Imivus organized several secret, illegal expeditions, but he vanished in 4657 AR during his 11th such journey—an expedition that sought the Veinstone Pyramid of the Four Pharaohs of Ascension. Imivus hoped that discovering the rumored pyramid would establish a firm connection between Ancient Osirion and influence from an alien presence from the Dark Tapestry beyond the stars. In particular, Imivus was chasing the legend of a long-lost book called *The Last Theorem*—a book that he believed would answer all of his questions.

WHERE AND WHEN

This chapter of *Doomsday Dawn* takes place in the year 4707 AR (11 years prior to Golarion's present) in the Varisian city of Magnimar, just before the events of *Pathfinder Adventure Path #1: Burnt Offerings*, the first installment of the Rise of the Runelords Adventure Path. Knowledge of the ancient empire of Thassilon remains obscure and unknown to the world at large, and with Osirion's ruins only recently opened to exploration, the Aucturn Enigma itself has not yet been rediscovered.

Since this chapter takes place before the first Pathfinder Adventure Path, there are no implications to the world based on the outcomes of previous campaigns that may have played out at your table.

Before his disappearance, Imivus had increasingly involved his only son Necerion in his work. Necerion welcomed the distraction, having grown frustrated and annoyed with his job as a Chelish diplomat stationed in the city of Magnimar. Yet, a sudden and mysterious illness (a mind quake, not unlike the one that had afflicted Ramlock thousands of years before) left him bedridden for months, preventing him from joining the doomed expedition to the Veinstone Pyramid. When word of his father's disappearance reached him, Necerion recovered from his mind quake a changed man. By day, he maintained the veneer of a mild-mannered Chelish diplomat, but each night he grew increasingly obsessed with finishing his father's work, spending most of his inheritance gathering every scrap of lore he could track down on the topic of Osirion, its history, and the Dark Tapestry. Among his regular correspondents into this research were a mysterious scholar named Aeteperax (who was, in fact, a green dragon) and an even more mysterious group that Necerion would eventually join—a loosely affiliated faction of cultists called the Night Heralds.

When Pharaoh Khemet III opened Osirion's tombs to foreign exploration in 4707 AR, Necerion officially abandoned Magnimar. He sold most of his belongings to finance his plans, placed what research material he couldn't bring with him in secure storage in Magnimar's Naos district, and left Avistan for Osirion to join with his Night Herald allies in the search for the ancient magical items known as *countdown clocks*. The Night Heralds believed these artifacts were counting down the seconds to doomsday, and that those who carried such a clock with them when time ran out would ascend as masters of a new age.

But when the supposedly secure vault where Necerion stored some of his research is broken into by a tribe of goblins, the Night Heralds' plans are exposed. A new group of heroes allied to another secret society, the Esoteric Order of the Palatine Eye, have a chance to stop the Doomsday Dawn!

GETTING STARTED

Keleri Deverin, an aristocrat and scholar living in Magnimar, has a problem. Just a week ago, she received an invitation from her cousin Kendra, mayor of the nearby town of Sandpoint, to attend that town's upcoming Swallowtail Festival. With the festival's focus on the consecration of Sandpoint's new cathedral, Keleri hoped to bring a family heirloom, the *Star of Desna*, to receive a blessing, but as she prepared for her trip, an unexpected complication arose.

When Keleri entered the old vault beneath the family estate to retrieve the star from storage, she found the chamber in total disarray. Chests lay smashed about the room, shelves were knocked over, and worst of all, the steel lockbox containing the *Star of Desna* was missing. The source of the robbery was made evident by a gaping hole in the center of the floor, leading down into the sewers, and sewage stains in the shape of goblin footprints leading out of it.

Enraged, Keleri lashed out at the now-empty shelves and ruined containers, only to find that she was not alone. A quiet whimpering came from behind a partially collapsed armoire. Investigating, she found a lone goblin, wounded and wretched. Keleri demanded answers about her stolen heirlooms, but the goblin only began howling in greater terror and begged for mercy. Keleri's rage subsided, and she asked the goblin what had frightened her so.

CREATING CHARACTERS

The players should build 1st-level characters using the rules found in the *Pathfinder Playtest Rulebook*. The group should work together to build a balanced and diverse party using any of the character options found in the book (subject to the specific restrictions listed below), while creating characters they are eager to see gain power and fame and glory as eventual saviors of Golarion. Encourage your players to avoid choosing the same ancestry and class as other players, so you'll be able to playtest as wide a range of character options as possible for the three chapters in which the primary characters star.

BACKGROUNDS

Each player must choose a background from those listed on page 3 of this adventure; these backgrounds are designed not only to tie the primary characters to NPCs and themes found in "The Lost Star," but to focus their strengths in specific areas of use for "The Lost Star," "The Mirrored Moon," and "When the Stars Go Dark."

PURCHASING GEAR

The PCs begin with 150 sp each. They can purchase any common gear found in Chapter 6 of the *Pathfinder Playtest Rulebook*, along with any other options they gain access to from their class and feat selections.

A. THE ASHEN OSSUARY
1 SQUARE = 5 FEET
A5
A4
A2
A3
A6
A1
A7
T
X
A8
A9
A12
A10
A11

The goblin introduced herself as Talga and explained that her tribe, the Mudchewer tribe, had been enslaved by a brutish hobgoblin named Drakus the Taker, who was forcing members of her tribe to dig into vaults and basements all around town to rob longshanks of loot and treasure. Those who refused were taken away, only to have their blood-drained bodies put on display as a warning to the other goblins. Immediately after the robbery on the Deverin basement, Talga and a few other desperate goblins rebelled, but they were cut down and slaughtered. Only Talga survived by retreating up to the Deverin vault and hiding.

Now with no home and nearly paralyzed with fear over the fate of her fellow goblins under Drakus's increasingly violent rule, Talga became desperate. She begged Keleri to send adventurers to her old lair, a complex called the Ashen Ossuary that was accessible via the Magnimar sewers. She promised to sketch a map of the lair and to lead Keleri and anyone who might help to the entrance, and vowed that in return she would work to spread the word among other goblin tribes in the sewers that longshanks are friendly.

While Keleri was sympathetic to the tale, she is a scholar, not an adventurer. However, she does have contacts, and knows of at least one eager new nominee for the task. Ever the forward thinker, she hopes that by calling upon allies—the PCs—she can not only recover her stolen heirloom, but perhaps even start a new diplomatic alliance between Magnimar and one of its most notorious antagonists.

Gathering the Party

Doomsday Dawn assumes that the player characters have ties of some sort to Keleri Deverin and dispenses with much of the preamble of setting things up in order to jump right into the action of dungeon crawling—and playtesting! Still, you should give your players time to describe their characters and decide whether they have established relationships or connections to each other. They may all know Keleri, but that doesn't mean they know each other.

Goblin PCs should take the Goblin Renegade background to set themselves up as Talga's allies, of course. If this is the case, Talga wasn't the only goblin to survive the attack, and the PC could be part of her original group. As Talga (or any PC goblin) can explain, the Mudchewer tribe only recently moved into the Ashen Ossuary at the command of their new leader, Drakus the Taker, after he murdered the tribe's previous chieftain. Talga or a PC goblin can give the other players several useful bits of information about the Ashen Ossuary, as summarized in the What Talga Knows sidebar on page 11. Player character goblins, of course, accompany the other PCs on this adventure, but Talga is not so brave—she's terrified of Drakus, thinks the hobgoblin is a vampire, and refuses to accompany the PCs in this adventure. If Drakus is to be defeated and the *Star of Desna* is to be reclaimed, it falls to the PCs alone to complete the task!

When you're ready to begin, inform the players that, after following Talga's directions, they've come to the entrance to the Ashen Ossuary.

THE ASHEN OSSUARY

The adventure begins just outside the entrance to the Ashen Ossuary, lair of Drakus the Taker and the oppressed Mudchewer tribe. The PCs traveled here through the Magnimar sewers, and now that they have found the entrance to the ossuary, they can return to the surface and rest any time they want—it's a 10-minute trip to make it back to the surface from the exit south of area **A1**. The Swallowtail Festival is scheduled to take place in just 7 days, and so Keleri would appreciate it if they can accomplish their mission before that time is up. Of course, once she sees what they return with, the Swallowtail Festival is likely to be the furthest thing from Keleri's mind!

Unless otherwise noted, no room in this dungeon has any lighting. Drakus and his minions all have darkvision, allowing them to see without any illumination.

PLAYTEST GOALS

The primary playtest goal of "The Lost Star" is to teach players and Game Masters alike how to play Pathfinder, whether this is your first time playing an RPG or whether you are transitioning from the previous edition of the game into the new rules. In "The Lost Star," we aim to provide a classic fantasy RPG gaming experience—many of the rules might be new, but the feel of exploring a dungeon (in this case, the Ashen Ossuary) and facing the creatures and dangers lurking within should be familiar, fun, and exciting. Despite the mechanical changes, the world of Golarion remains unchanged, and the stories and adventures we all enjoy telling and playing, respectively, are the same.

"The Lost Star" also gives the players the chance to build characters that will truly be their own. These characters will return as the central characters in "The Mirrored Moon" and "When the Stars Go Dark," and they will play roles in the background of the other chapters. The playtest goals of "In Pale Mountain's Shadow," "Affair at Sombrefell Hall," "The Heroes of Undarin," and "Red Flags" have specific character needs, and the players will create more focused and specific characters for those chapters. In many ways, however, the ones they create for this chapter are destined to be the "stars" of *Doomsday Dawn*. As such, throughout the rest of the adventure, these player characters are often referred to as the primary characters, for it is their actions that will decide the plot's eventual success or failure. You'll want to let your players know this at the start, not only so they won't be surprised or disappointed to learn that they won't be playing these characters in every chapter, but also so they'll be able to anticipate these characters' return to the roles of protagonist during the adventure's most critical moments.

A1. Slimy Cistern — Trivial 1

The damp sewer passages have led to a slimy cistern that stinks of decay. On the northern edge of this circular chamber lies a pile of burnt bones in front of a scorched tunnel.

The charred tunnel entrance on the north side of the cistern is the primary entrance to the Ashen Ossuary. Several years ago a fire broke out in the vault, burning much of it to ash and inspiring its current name. The cistern outside the vault has not held much water for several decades, owing to a broken drain in the center. What remains is a number of slimy, fetid pools and a layer of muck on the floor.

The Mudchewer goblins use this area to dispose of bones, food scraps, and other waste, a habit that often draws scavengers to the area. Currently, a sewer ooze dwells amid the slimy waste. The ooze is hungry, and will likely move on in a few days to find food elsewhere, but for now the creature slithers up to attack the moment the PCs get within 10 feet or as soon as anyone takes an action against it.

Keleri Deverin

1 SEWER OOZE — CREATURE 1

Pathfinder Playtest Bestiary

Initiative Stealth +6

A2. Mudchewer Central — High 1

The walls of this long chamber are scorched dark, and the thick layers of soot crusting to the ceiling above attest to the tremendous fire that must have raged through this room in the past. Burial niches in the walls and the row of central pillars contain only fragments of burnt wood and charred bone.

This long chamber was originally a burial vault and then later an ossuary for a family of aristocrats that lived in Magnimar just over a century ago, but it has long since been plundered and forgotten. A few years back, a pair of grave robbers accidentally triggered an ancient trap that poured alchemist's fire into the room, causing a terrific conflagration that consumed the remaining valuables along with most of the bones and bodies interred here.

While the room's history and appearance might be spooky, the chamber's current occupants aren't bothered by it at all. Ever since Drakus brought the Mudchewer tribe here, the majority of the goblins have used this room as their common room, sleeping in "bed holes" that are actually burial niches filled with ashes and bone fragments.

Drakus's time in charge of the Mudchewer tribe has not been healthy for the goblins' numbers. Between accidents while looting vaults, fatal visits to Drakus's inner chambers, and desertion by some of its members, the Mudchewer tribe has dwindled to only a handful of goblins today. Those who remain have taken on the attitude that they have survived because they are "favored" by Boss Drakus, and their loyalty to the creature they think is a powerful hobgoblin is unwavering.

Currently, only four goblin warriors can be found in this chamber. These goblins are gathered in the northern portion of the room and are hard at work building a 10-foot-tall statue of Drakus out of garbage, mud, twine, and bits and pieces of wood. The task isn't going well—the haphazardly constructed statue keeps collapsing under its own weight—but the goblins don't let this bother them. Once they notice the PCs, though, they abandon their task and race forward to attack, howling and hooting.

4 GOBLIN WARRIORS — CREATURE 0

Pathfinder Playtest Bestiary

Initiative Perception +1

While most of the so-called bed holes are empty, a search of the northernmost niches can be fruitful, for the Mudchewers haven't used these niches as bed holes at all. With a successful DC 10 Perception check, a PC uncovers a tarnished silver ring worth 5 gp and a *minor healing potion*. On a critical success, the character also uncovers an *owlbear claw* wedged in a crack at the back of an upper niche.

A3. Vermin Den — Severe 1

This roughly carved chamber looks to have once been much larger, but now the entire southern half is choked with rubble and debris.

The rubble in this chamber is difficult terrain, costing 10 feet of movement for each square entered (or costing 15 feet on a diagonal).

There is a nest of six giant centipedes in this room. The skittering creatures can clamber over the rubble without treating it like difficult terrain, and they come and go through a narrow network of fissures among the rubble. The centipedes do not attack enemy goblins and won't pursue prey from this room. When combat begins, the centipedes use Stealth for initiative rolls.

6 GIANT CENTIPEDES — CREATURE 0

Pathfinder Playtest Bestiary

Initiative Stealth +6

A4. Motivation Room

> The narrow passage opens up into a small burial vault that has been ransacked. Shattered remains of skeletons lie on the floor in twisted heaps among scattered rocks and debris, but the bodies of four recently killed goblins on display in the four niches are much more intact.

When Drakus feels the need to provide the Mudchewers with extra motivation, or when a goblin steps out of line and needs to be made an example of, the results of Drakus's punishments are put on display here so the rest of the goblins won't forget what happens when they get in trouble. A PC who examines the bodies will determine that the goblins are only a few days dead, and any PC who succeeds at a DC 12 Medicine check notes a single finger-sized hole in the throat of each goblin and the disturbing fact that the bodies are completely drained of blood. With a critical success on the Medicine check, the PC concludes that since the goblin bodies remain dead and have only one relatively large hole, a vampire wasn't likely responsible for their deaths.

A5. Fungus Bloom — Low 1

> The walls of this gently curving passageway are covered in thin, fibrous tendrils that connect to a large mass of red fungus growing in the center of this small vault. The central mass is almost three feet high, from which several long, pale gray stalks have extended upward to brush against the ceiling.

The fungus in this chamber is part of Drakus's method of controlling the Mudchewers, for the spores exuded by the strange growth dulls the mind. These spores drift throughout the complex, but within this chamber they are particularly concentrated.

With a successful DC 13 Nature skill check, a PC identifies the threat as mindfog fungus and determines that while burning it destroys the fungus, doing so releases a virulent cloud of spores.

MINDFOG FUNGUS — HAZARD 2

Complex Environmental

Stealth +0

Description A mass of red fungus emits mind-altering spores.

Disable Survival DC 19 (trained) to prevent the plant from emitting spores

AC 15, **TAC** 13; **Fort** +7, **Ref** +4

Hardness 6; **Immunities** mental; **Weaknesses** fire 10

Spore Cloud

Trigger A creature enters the fungus's room.

Effect The fungus rolls initiative.

Spore Explosion

Trigger The fungus takes damage.

Effect If the damage was not fire damage, spores spray out, causing the same effect as the fungus's routine. The fungus is then destroyed. If the attack dealt fire damage, the fungus explodes, leaving virulent spores that linger for 10 minutes. Though the fungus isn't there anymore, this continues the fungus's routine at an increased DC of 16.

Routine (1 action) On its initiative, the fungus disperses its spores through the room. Each creature in the room must succeed at a DC 14 Fortitude save or become confused for 1d4 rounds. On a critical failure, the creature is also stupefied 4 for 1 hour and is easy to control and bully. A confused creature takes a –4 circumstance penalty on its saving throws against the fungus.

WHAT TALGA KNOWS

Before the PCs infiltrate the Ashen Ossuary, Talga can give them a few helpful hints about what they'll be facing.

Ashen Ossuary: Talga and a few others snuck around the Ashen Ossuary when the Mudchewers first claimed the dungeon as their home, and the goblin can provide a rough sketch of the complex for the PCs (allowing you as the GM to use the appropriate map from the *Pathfinder Playtest Flip-Mat Multi-Pack* in play without worrying about spoiling the dungeon layout). While she can tell the PCs what to expect in most of the rooms, she warns the PCs that she has no idea what sorts of dangers and defenses exist beyond Drakus's door (area **A10** and beyond). If you use the *Pathfinder Playtest Flip-Mat* in play, consider covering up areas **A10–A12** with pieces of scrap paper, revealing those parts of the dungeon only once the PCs reach them.

Goblins: The Mudchewer goblins who remain loyal to Drakus are no friends of Talga, and she understands they will need to be fought and perhaps killed by the PCs. She suspects (correctly) that as long as Drakus lives, diplomacy is not an option in dealing with the goblins.

Drakus: Drakus is a scary hobgoblin who drinks blood and, Talga fears, might just be a vampire. When a Mudchewer goblin displeases him, Drakus takes the goblin into a back room, and a few hours later the goblin is returned to the tribe dead, with a hole in the neck and all of the blood drained from the body. Drakus displays these bodies in the main sleeping quarters to keep the other goblins in line.

A6. Purification Fountain — High 1

> The sound of dripping water echoes through this chamber. On the north side of the room, a nearly ten-foot-tall visage of a woman's face is carved into the wall. Trickles of water run down her cheeks like tears into a foul and polluted reservoir below, which itself drains to a large pool of fetid black water on the south side of the room.

Both doors in this room are made of ancient wood. The door to the south is locked, but a PC can open it with three successful DC 20 Thievery checks. The door to the east isn't locked, but features a crude alarm positioned just outside it, made from a number of rusted

GOBLIN POLITICS

If there are goblin PCs in the party, they may be hesitant to kill the members of their former tribe, instead hoping to subdue them and perhaps rehabilitate them after the adventure is over. Others might be more willing to assume that their former tribe members are beyond saving and attack with the intent to kill these goblins.

Either approach is acceptable. If the PCs subdue the goblins (see the rules for nonlethal attacks on page 294 of the *Pathfinder Playtest Rulebook*) and provide proof that Drakus is dead or defeated, the surviving Mudchewers have a change of heart—a change that over time spreads through many other goblins that dwell in Magnimar's sewers. If the PCs kill the goblins, Talga is sad for their loss, but understands that it was the only way they'd be free from servitude. In either case, the fate of the Mudchewer tribe has no further ramification on *Doomsday Dawn's* plot.

Mindfog Fungus

pieces of armor suspended by rope. Anyone opening the door (which swings into the hallway when opened) creates quite a clatter, which can be easily heard in area **A7**. A creature can attempt a DC 15 Perception check while searching the door to notice the alarm. Opening the door very slowly (over at least 1 full round) prevents the alarm from triggering.

The chamber itself was once used by priests of Pharasma, goddess of birth, death, and fate, to purify the dead before the final rites and burial were performed in the chamber to the west. The waters cried by the fountain once had the power to wash away impurities of both body and soul, but now the murky waters are corrupted by an unholy idol that lies in the southern pool. A PC who succeeds at a DC 15 Perception check can find it.

The idol itself is about the size of a human head and depicts the goddess of nightmares and mother of demons, Lamashtu, perched upon a throne of bones. Drakus had owned the idol long before he took over the Mudchewer tribe, but when he decided to move into the Ashen Ossuary, he noticed the pool's restorative powers. Not wanting his goblins to counteract the mind-dulling effects of the spores or to gain any other possible benefits from the pool's waters, Drakus tossed the vile idol of Lamashtu into the pool, taking additional pleasure in knowing his blasphemous act tainted waters sacred to another religion.

If a non-evil creature touches the idol, or if any creature strikes a solid blow to it, the idol splits open like a cracked egg and unleashes a pair of quasits. The monsters immediately attack and attempt to slay the PCs, and then move to return the idol to its resting place.

If the idol is removed from the pool without a non-evil creature physically touching it (a task that, using tools, requires a successful DC 12 Thievery check to complete), the release of the quasits can be prevented.

2 QUASITS — CREATURE 1

Pathfinder Playtest Bestiary
Initiative Perception +4

The filthy water flowing from the fountain down to the pools is not safe to drink. Anyone who drinks the water must succeed at a DC 15 Fortitude save or become sick 2 and be unable to recover from this sick condition for 1 hour. This is a level 1 disease.

If the idol is removed or destroyed, the pool slowly recovers from its corruption. Reduce the save DC by 1 for every 10 minutes that elapse. After 50 minutes, the water fully clears and regains its purifying properties; no further saves are needed. The first time each day a given creature drinks from the fountain, they recover 1d8 Hit Points and is cured of all level 3 or lower poisons and diseases affecting them.

A7. Goblin Headquarters — Severe 1

This large sunken chamber is more cavern than worked stone, and the tangle of damp flagstones underfoot provides an uneven surface. Water and slime drips from the walls, seeping in through narrow cracks above. A crude fire pit sits in the middle of the room, surrounded by filthy mats of fur and fungus. The stench of warm, wet bodies hangs faintly in the air, underlying the smell of overcooked meat.

A 15-foot-high ledge in the southeast corner of the room contains a secret passageway to Drakus's lair. A PC must succeed at a DC 15 Athletics check to Climb this ledge. The secret door in the south wall is cleverly hidden and can be found only with a successful DC 15 Perception check. The door is also locked; while a tiny keyhole allows it to be unlocked, Drakus carries the only key. A PC can Pick the Lock with three successful DC 15 Thievery skill checks.

If the goblins become aware of the PCs before they enter the room, they douse the cooking fire, which plunges the room into darkness. If the goblins are not aware of the PCs, the room still has dim light from the fire, but this light does not extend to the ledge, which remains shrouded in darkness.

This chamber is where the most ferocious of the Mudchewer goblins live—a substantial upgrade from the bed holes in the walls of area **A2**. But as very few members of the Mudchewer tribe survive to this day, this area is equally sparsely occupied. If the PCs triggered the alarm trap outside the door to area **A6**, then the goblins are alerted to the PCs' approach and are quiet, waiting to ambush them with the rock trap (see Falling Rock Trap below) and use Stealth for initiative rolls. If not, a PC can hear the sounds of goblins arguing over a scrap of meat with a successful DC 12 Perception check (in which case the goblins use Perception for initiative rolls). The Mudchewers haven't had their own chieftain since Drakus killed the previous one. None of the goblins here dare to present themself as a leader for fear of being the next goblin called into Drakus's private chambers.

1 Goblin Commando — Creature 1

Pathfinder Playtest Bestiary

Initiative Perception +5 or Stealth +6

Additional Items *minor healing potion*

1 Goblin Pyro — Creature 1

Pathfinder Playtest Bestiary

Initiative Perception +2 or Stealth +1

3 Goblin Warriors — Creature 0

Pathfinder Playtest Bestiary

Initiative Perception +1 or Stealth +5

The goblins have rigged a crude rock trap in this room to deter intruders. The trap's trigger is manually activated, requiring a pull on a rope (located at the "X" on the map). When the rope is pulled, the rocks crash down, dropping the rocks into the four squares labeled with a "T" on the map.

Falling Rock Trap — Hazard 0

Mechanical Trap

Stealth DC 17 (trained)

Description A net filled with rocks is set to drop in a 10-foot-by-10-foot square area.

Disable Thievery DC 12 (trained) to sabotage the rope that releases the trap

AC 10, **TAC** 7; **Fort** +1, **Ref** +1

Hardness 0; **Immunity** critical hits, object immunities, precision damage

Rock Fall

Trigger A creature pulls the rope at the spot marked with an "X" on the map.

Effect Rocks fall on the are marked with a "T," dealing 2d6 bludgeoning damage to everyone in the area (DC 13 Reflex half, or no damage on a critical success).

In this room, the goblins have stashed a few valuable items that they've pocketed from their basement break-ins, keeping their prizes secret from Drakus (or so they think—in truth, Drakus is fully aware of the stash but doesn't care about it). The goblins' stash can be discovered with a successful DC 12 Perception check. It lies under a pile of moldy straw behind a stalagmite near the rope trigger for the falling rock trap, and consists of two flasks of alchemist's fire, a smokestick, and 10 cp.

A8. Room of Ruined Repose — Severe 1

A narrow flight of stairs winds downward, descending into this circular chamber. Stone biers line the walls, but the bodies that may have once rested upon them now lie scattered across the floor.

Drakus's presence in the complex has corrupted this once-sacred chamber, which used to house bodies until they could be properly cleansed and buried. The six bodies that were allowed to linger here unattended to have risen from death as skeletons. When Drakus first entered the room months ago, these undead rose up to challenge him. Drakus retreated, and upon seeing that the skeletons simply fell to the ground rather than pursuing him, decided it was best to simply leave this room as-is until he figured out a way to command the skeletons to his bidding.

The skeletons swiftly rise up to attack any intruders in the room, and they fight until destroyed. They have no desire to leave their resting place, and do not pursue foes up the stairs out of the room.

6 SKELETON GUARDS — CREATURE 0

Pathfinder Playtest Bestiary
Initiative Perception +0

Anyone who digs through to the bottom of the corpse pile or Seeks the corpse pile for details and succeeds at a DC 15 Perception check finds the body of Viroun Tamith, a young Pathfinder who ventured into the sewers upon hearing rumors of a marauding gang in the depths. He was one of Drakus's first victims. On his body, the PCs can find a *scroll of shocking grasp*, a *wayfinder*, 4 sp, and 31 cp.

Statue of Pharasma

A9. Choking Sands

A tall stone statue depicting a beautiful woman in ceremonial robes stands in an alcove here. The woman clutches a dagger with one hand and holds an hourglass in the other. Red sand swirls within the hourglass, moving of its own will.

The statue depicts the goddess Pharasma, placed as a trap to prevent non-believers from entering the sacred chambers beyond. A PC who succeeds at a DC 10 Religion check identifies the statue as the goddess of death, and on a critical success knows that the nature of its position and curiously animated hourglass sands suggest a traditional Pharasmin trap.

Anyone who tries to move past this statue (going in any direction) who hasn't been blessed by a cleric of Pharasma or who doesn't openly wear or carry Pharasma's religious symbol triggers the statue's trap, which causes the hourglass to turn and fill the corridor with choking red sand. For the purposes of triggering this trap, anyone who has consumed the purified waters in area **A6** within the past 24 hours or is a cleric of Pharasma counts as being blessed, as does anyone wearing her religious symbol (Drakus, who remains unconcerned about committing this minor blasphemy, uses this method to bypass the trap).

SANDS OF THE BONEYARD — HAZARD 1

Magic Trap

Stealth DC 15 (trained) or *detect magic*
Description A statue of Pharasma holds an hourglass filled with red sand that explodes outward to choke intruders.
Disable Thievery DC 18 (trained) to remove the hourglass without passing in front of the statue, or spell DC 14 (1st level) to dispel the rune
Choking Sand (arcane, conjuration)
Trigger A creature who has not been blessed by a cleric of Pharasma or is not wearing a holy symbol of Pharasma passes the statue in the direction of area **A10**.
Effect Swirling sand bursts forth from the hourglass, filling the corridor for 10 feet in each direction. A creature that starts its turn in the area must succeed at a DC 15 Fortitude save or choke and take 1d6 damage. Once triggered, the sand swirls in the corridor for 1 minute.

Reset The trap resets over the course of 1 minute after it is triggered.

A10. Befouled Shrine — High 1

The door leading into this chamber is not locked, but it is stuck, requiring a successful DC 12 Athletics check to open. Each attempt makes a loud noise, giving Drakus time to prepare if a PC does not open the door on the first try.

While this room may have been used as a shrine long ago, its contents are now a ghastly mockery of its former purpose. To the south, an altar upon a raised dais is surrounded by mosaics depicting a stern woman with long, flowing white hair, all of which has been slathered in filth and gore. The whole area reeks of decay and cloying, clotted blood.

The current leader of the Mudchewer tribe, Drakus, uses this room to plan his upcoming raids and take his occasional meals. Although Drakus appears to be a hobgoblin, he is in fact a shapechanging monstrosity known as a faceless stalker. He maintains his appearance as a hobgoblin to maintain his hold over the goblins without completely frightening them off, in the meantime using their knack for breaking into basement vaults from below to raid treasures throughout Magnimar. Drakus hopes to collect enough valuables so he can present a wealth of treasures to a mysterious creature called the Red Bishop that has long plagued Varisia's Lost Coast, but he hasn't yet found enough loot to abandon the Mudchewers. He's stashed the bulk of the loot so far in area **A12**, and while he's not sure how valuable any of these objects truly are, he hopes that they will be enough to appease the Red Bishop and earn him a place among the mysterious villain's favored minions.

If the PCs manage to enter the room without alerting him, Drakus is hunched over the altar in the middle of feeding on a recently slain goblin, blood running from his strange three-pronged tongue (which is certainly not a hobgoblin trait). If they do alert him, he is instead hiding behind the altar waiting to ambush them when they enter and uses Stealth for initiative rolls rather than Perception. In either case, Drakus reverts to his true form at the start of the battle and fights to the death.

DRAKUS THE TAKER — CREATURE 3

Aberration Chaotic Evil Medium

Perception +6, darkvision
Languages Aquan, Common; *tongues*
Skills +3, Athletics +9, Deception +10, Stealth +9
Str +3, **Dex** +3, **Con** +1, **Int** +1, **Wis** +2, **Cha** +3
Items expert longsword, master key (unlocks all doors in the dungeon), 2 *minor healing potions*, silver religious symbol of Pharasma, expert studded leather

AC 18, **TAC** 16; **Fort** +7, **Ref** +8, **Will** +5; +2 circumstance bonus vs. auditory and visual
HP 40; **Resistances** bludgeoning 5
Attack of Opportunity

Speed 25 feet
Melee long sword +10 (versatile P), **Damage** 1d8+3 slashing claw +9 (agile), **Damage** 1d4+3 plus grab
Occult Innate Spells DC 17; **Constant** *tongues*
Assume Form (concentrate, occult, polymorph, transmutation) The faceless stalker spends 10 minutes reshaping its appearance to take on the shape of any Small or Medium humanoid. It gains a +4 circumstance bonus on Deception checks to pass as that creature.
Blood Nourishment The faceless stalker uses its three-pronged tongue to drink the blood of an adjacent restrained or unconscious creature. The creature gains drained 1.
Revert Form
Requirements The faceless stalker is in an assumed form.
Effect The faceless stalker resumes its true form. Until the start of its next turn, it gains a +2 conditional bonus on attack rolls, damage rolls, saving throws, and skill checks.
Sneak Attack (precision) The faceless stalker deals 1d6 extra precision damage to flat-footed creatures.

1 DIRE RAT — CREATURE 0

Pathfinder Playtest Bestiary
Initiative Perception +4

Originally sacred to the Pharasmin faith, the altar in this room was crafted to help ease the dead in their journey into the River of Souls, but it was also the focus of many ceremonies for the living to let go of their loved ones. If the altar and surrounding mosaics are cleaned (an activity that takes 10 minutes) and the proper prayer is uttered (this prayer can be recalled with a successful DC 15 Pharasma Lore check, or by consulting the book in area **A11**), what appears to be a swirling wind of thankful souls surges through the room. Pleased with the act of cleansing the shrine, Pharasma has taken notice, and all of the PCs gain her blessing.

Pharasma's blessing persists until the next time a character would normally perish—at this point, the character instead loses the dying condition and immediately stabilizes. This effect can only occur once, but it does not otherwise expire and cannot be dispelled or removed. Creatures blessed by Pharasma can bypass the trap in area **A9**.

A11. Pharasma's Sanctum

The door leading into this chamber is locked. It can be opened with three successful DC 20 Thievery skill checks or with the master key carried by Drakus.

> Beyond the door is a short hallway that leads to a flight of stairs, ascending into a small chapel. This space is perfectly still and spotlessly clean, a stark departure from the grime and filth that has marred the rest of this complex.

Atop the stairs is a small chapel dedicated to the Lady of Graves. This is the one place that even Drakus refused to defile, for merely entering it made him extremely uncomfortable. Unlike the other chambers of this dungeon, this small shrine remains a sacred place of Pharasma. Her imagery appears again here, in a simple mosaic on the wall above a stone altar. Atop the altar is a book, a dagger, and a silver bowl.

The book on the altar is a copy of *The Bones Land in a Spiral*, one of Pharasma's sacred texts. The book is open to a passage discussing the proper litany to be spoken when sanctifying a creature's passage into Pharasma's realm, and if this prayer is uttered over the shrine in area **A10** after the shrine is cleansed, it activates Pharasma's blessing as detailed there. The book is worth 14 gp.

The silver bowl is filled with a dose of holy water, but as long as the bowl remains on the altar, a glance into the waters within reveals to the viewer an image of their future. In this case, it shows the PC looking into the bowl an image of a much older version of themself, trudging

through a vast desert at night, while the stars wheel at a dizzying speed overhead before blinking out into darkness, one by one. This vision remains the same for each PC.

The dagger upon the altar is called *Final Rest*, and is a *+1 ghost touch dagger*.

A12. Drakus's Lair

> This cramped cavern reeks of stale sweat and dried blood. Tucked into the far corner is a filthy straw bed made from ratty hides and moldy clothes. Off to the side sits a pair of chests, one of which is open and filled to the top with a strange assortment of clothes.

The closed chest is both locked (requiring a PC to succeed at three DC 22 Thievery checks to Pick the Lock) and trapped (see below). The trap is automatically disarmed if the chest is unlocked with the master key carried by Drakus.

Drakus

POISONED LOCK — **HAZARD 1**

Pathfinder Playtest Bestiary

Stealth DC +15

Drakus uses this chamber as his personal lair. The foul-smelling heap of rags and straw is where he rests. There is little of value here, but if the PCs take 10 minutes to sort through the heap, they can uncover a lost coin purse that contains 2 sp and 7 cp.

The open chest contains a wide variety of clothing—garments worn by Drakus whenever he needs to change his disguise. These include barbarian hides, merchant clothes, noble attire (with fake jewelry), and even a city watch uniform. Sold together, the clothing here is worth 10 sp.

Inside the closed and trapped chest is all of the treasure stolen over the last several months by Drakus and his goblins. A large amount of loot can be found within, consisting of an expert-quality crossbow, a *feather token* (bird), three *light arrows*, a *scroll of bless*, a *scroll of magic weapon*, a *wand of produce flame*, a vial of *oil of mending*, a collection of rare inks and powders (worth 8 gp), a series of related esoteric books (worth 10 gp), a bag of gemstones (worth 80 gp), and a small sack filled with coins (5 gp, 74 sp, and 183 cp).

This treasure is, of course, all stolen property from various Magnimarian citizens. The PCs can certainly keep the treasure for themselves, but if they turn the treasure over to the authorities in order to get it returned to the proper owners, the grateful owners reward each PC with an item. You should choose these items, tailoring each to be of particular use to each PC. Each item should be a 3rd-level magic item—while this is less than the value of the stolen loot itself, the fact that these items are tailor-made for the PC should make them more valuable than if the PCs had kept the loot, or sold it and split the profits among themselves.

Also found within the chest are two items whose owners are either missing or already allied to the PCs. These items include the *Star of Desna*, the heirloom Keleri Deverin sent the PCs into the sewers to retrieve, and a thick journal with the title *Notes on the Last Theorem* scratched into its cover (see Concluding the Chapter below for further details on this important clue).

Concluding the Chapter

Once the PCs recover the *Star of Desna*, they can return to Keleri, hopefully in time for her to make it to the Swallowtail Festival. If they fail to retrieve it in 7 days, she cancels her trip entirely but remains thankful if the PCs manage to recover the heirloom.

In any event, Keleri is thoroughly relieved to have the family heirloom back, but when she gets a chance to see the other things the PCs have recovered, she is even more surprised by *Notes on the Last Theorem*. (Note that *Doomsday Dawn* assumes the PCs show her the book or mention it—if they don't, you should arrange for them to learn the following information nonetheless, be it via their own research or consultation with another NPC of your design. It is vital that they acquire the book, as it is a major plot point in this adventure.)

Notes on the Last Theorem is a leather-bound journal written in Aklo by a careful hand. The book once belonged to the Chelish diplomat Necerion, a man who recently abandoned his duties in Magnimar and went missing. With a successful DC 15 Society check, a PC recalls rumors that Necerion traveled to Osirion to chase legends of hidden treasures in the desert sands.

If the PCs can read Aklo, they can learn the book's contents after a few hours of skimming—otherwise, Keleri, who knows the language, can inform them of its contents. The book focuses on cataloging information about the supposed contents and location of a rare tome called *The Last Theorem*—a book said to contain exhaustive information on the sinister aliens of the Dominion of the Black, and in particular a number of hints toward an upcoming invasion of Golarion by these horrific monsters.

In addition, the book notes that *The Last Theorem* is said to contain magical formulas, equations, and incantations capable of affecting the physical world and "making ready the world for its new Dominion rulers." Much of the book seems to be concerned with an upcoming doomsday, yet no clues in *Notes on the Last Theorem* indicate what date this doom is to occur.

The mysterious book also clarifies that Necerion was much more than merely a Chelish diplomat and irrefutably proves that Necerion had ties to a nefarious secret society of Dominion cultists known as the Night Heralds. The book doesn't go into further details about the Night Heralds.

At this point, Keleri tells the PCs she has a secret to share—she is a member of a secret society whose interests lie in the hidden nature of reality: the Esoteric Order of the Palatine Eye. Among other goals, the Esoteric Order seeks to find and control dangerous lore and secrets so that cults like the Night Heralds cannot use them for ill intent. While the Esoteric Order has other primary enemies (such as the death cultists known as the Whispering Way), they have of recent years grown more and more concerned with the machinations of the Night Heralds, and the hints provided in the pages of *Notes on the Last Theorem* are truly worrying to Keleri, who fears that Necerion may be seeking some ancient doomsday weapon or other potent artifact. She cautions that the group is dangerous and must be stopped.

ABOUT MIND QUAKES

Three of the key NPCs in *Doomsday Dawn*—Ramlock, Necerion, and Verid Oscilar—were afflicted by powerful psychic assaults called mind quakes, which are anything but happenstance. These targeted telepathic attacks were launched by the Dominion of the Black, an association of dreadful alien beings native to the dark spaces between worlds, utilizing theories and concepts given to them by a mysterious entity. Unknown even to the Dominion, this benefactor was in fact a dire foe, none other than the Outer God, Nyarlathotep.

Each mind quake is unique and affects its target differently, but always with a singular goal in mind: to transform natives of distant planets into agents of societal self-destruction. Nyarlathotep's end goal is to grant mortals (be they humans, Dominion aliens, or anything in between) the tools they need to unknowingly sow chaos and despair.

In this adventure, these mind quakes compel their victims to serve up Golarion as a sacrifice to waken the nascent Great Old One, Aucturn. The fact that he has been able to arrange the participation of the Dominion of the Black in these plots is an added delight to the Outer God, for he knows that the Dominion and humanity alike will suffer terrible losses when they eventually bicker, clash, and—he hopes—ultimately awaken Aucturn in an act that will destroy both Golarion and the Dominion presence on Aucturn.

Most individuals who are struck by a mind quake become obsessed with the dark spaces between worlds, collectively known as the Dark Tapestry, but few ever realize the true nature of what's happened to them, who they now serve, and why they feel compelled to lead strange expeditions or track down eldritch secrets. But those who learn the truth and whole-heartedly embrace their role are among the most dangerous of them all.

It's unlikely that the PCs in *Doomsday Dawn* will have the chance to learn this deep, hidden truth about the mind quakes, but if you feel your players will enjoy this look behind the curtain to glimpse the link to Nyarlathotep, one of the genre's oldest and most notorious villains, you can reveal this element at the adventure's end.

Keleri needs time to study *Notes on the Last Theorem* and to report back to the Esoteric Order about this lucky find. She invites the PCs to help her in studying the text and even offers to sponsor them if they wish to seek membership in the Esoteric Order. *Doomsday Dawn* assumes the PCs take Keleri up on her offer, and that they will return to the adventure's plot in "The Mirrored Moon."

Doomsday Dawn continues in "In Pale Mountain's Shadow" as a new set of heroes work against Necerion's goals, this time racing against the Night Heralds to secure an important item—a *countdown clock* whose mysteries could well reveal the date on which the end of the world is set to occur!

IN PALE MOUNTAIN'S SHADOW

Two years have passed since Necerion traveled to Osirion to follow in his father's footsteps exploring Osirion's lost ruins. He and his Night Herald allies have learned much in that time, particularly after an unaffiliated group of adventurers discovered and explored the resting place of the Four Pharaohs of Ascension. Still hoping to recover *The Last Theorem*, Necerion and his allies are scouring desert ruins, hoping to reclaim magical gemstones known as *countdown clocks*. Necerion suspects that when the next conjunction with Aucturn occurs, those who carry a *countdown clock* will gain great power, but the rarity of these ancient items makes securing enough for himself and other Night Heralds a difficult task—especially considering that as adventurers explore the ruins of Osirion, they might also uncover hints of the upcoming event.

WHERE AND WHEN

"In Pale Mountain's Shadow" takes place in northwestern Katapesh, a land in which frenetic and unfettered trade takes precedence over all things. The Pactmasters, the ruling caste of the nation, set the laws, following whims and rules that only they know. Trade draws all sorts of people from every corner of Golarion to the nation, seeking rare goods, slaves, or the popular drug, pesh. Most stay within the relative safety of the capital (also named Katapesh) and other cities near the coast rather than crossing the rolling dunes and forbidding peaks farther inland.

"In Pale Mountain's Shadow" takes place in the year 4709 AR, beginning in the recently liberated town of Kelmarane and moving to the slopes of Pale Mountain—the same locations that feature prominently in the Legacy of Fire Adventure Path. This chapter assumes that the events of that Adventure Path have started and are in the process of playing out, with the events of this chapter occurring during the year of downtime built into the conclusion of Legacy of Fire's first adventure, *Howl of the Carrion King*.

If you've played Legacy of Fire at your table, feel free to have the PCs of that adventure appear in the background in their civic leadership roles, but they shouldn't become directly involved in this adventure's events. The Esoteric Order of the Palatine Eye (and thus this chapter's PCs) should strive to keep their goal secret, for fear of the Night Heralds learning of the secret entrance into the Tomb of Tular Seft.

As "In Pale Mountain's Shadow" begins, Necerion's fear is made manifest as the Esoteric Order of the Palatine Eye sends a group of heroes—the PCs—to explore a long-forgotten tomb in Katapesh believed to contain a *countdown clock*.

Since the events of "The Lost Star," Keleri Deverin and her allies (along with the primary characters from that chapter) within the Esoteric Order of the Palatine Eye have decoded the contents of *Notes on The Last Theorem*. Mentioned within these notes are the *countdown clocks*, magical gemstones that contain a constantly changing and decreasing number that all count down to a significant date in the future—a date that *Notes on the Last Theorem* claims shall be the end of the world. Securing a *countdown clock* would give the Esoteric Order an accurate date for this devastating event and thus great aid in planning to avert it. For some months, the Esoteric Order has scoured the northeastern region of Garund, the southern continent in the Inner Sea region, for any hint as to the resting place of a *countdown clock*. As this chapter begins, they've finally determined one such location: the Tomb of Tular Seft in northwestern Katapesh, in the foothills of the dormant volcano called Pale Mountain.

Unfortunately, the Night Heralds have learned this information as well. For the moment, the Esoteric Order has the advantage in that their research has revealed a shortcut into the tomb, but if they don't act swiftly, they will lose the race to claim this *countdown clock*. Their only chance to beat the Night Heralds is to enlist adventurers to get there first!

CREATING CHARACTERS

For "In Pale Mountain's Shadow," the players set aside the primary characters they made for "The Lost Star" and create brand-new 4th-level characters. Because the PCs are being hired to cross a dangerous tract of terrain, some of them should be characters suited to exploring the wilderness. Rangers and druids would make good choices, but the players should still strive to create a balanced party with a variety of characters rather than multiples of the most wilderness-focused classes.

The players have a few restrictions when generating characters for this chapter which are detailed in the column to the right. Keep these guidelines in mind when creating the new characters for this part of the adventure.

GETTING STARTED

Tular Seft was a scholar of the Elemental Planes who lived during the later part of Osiron's First Age, a time in which the ancient empire's expanse encompassed much of modern Katapesh. During his lifetime, Tular made an alliance with a janni genie, the least of geniekind, named Mabar. As janni have a connection with all four elements, the two explored the connections

LEVEL

Each PC should be 4th level.

BACKGROUNDS

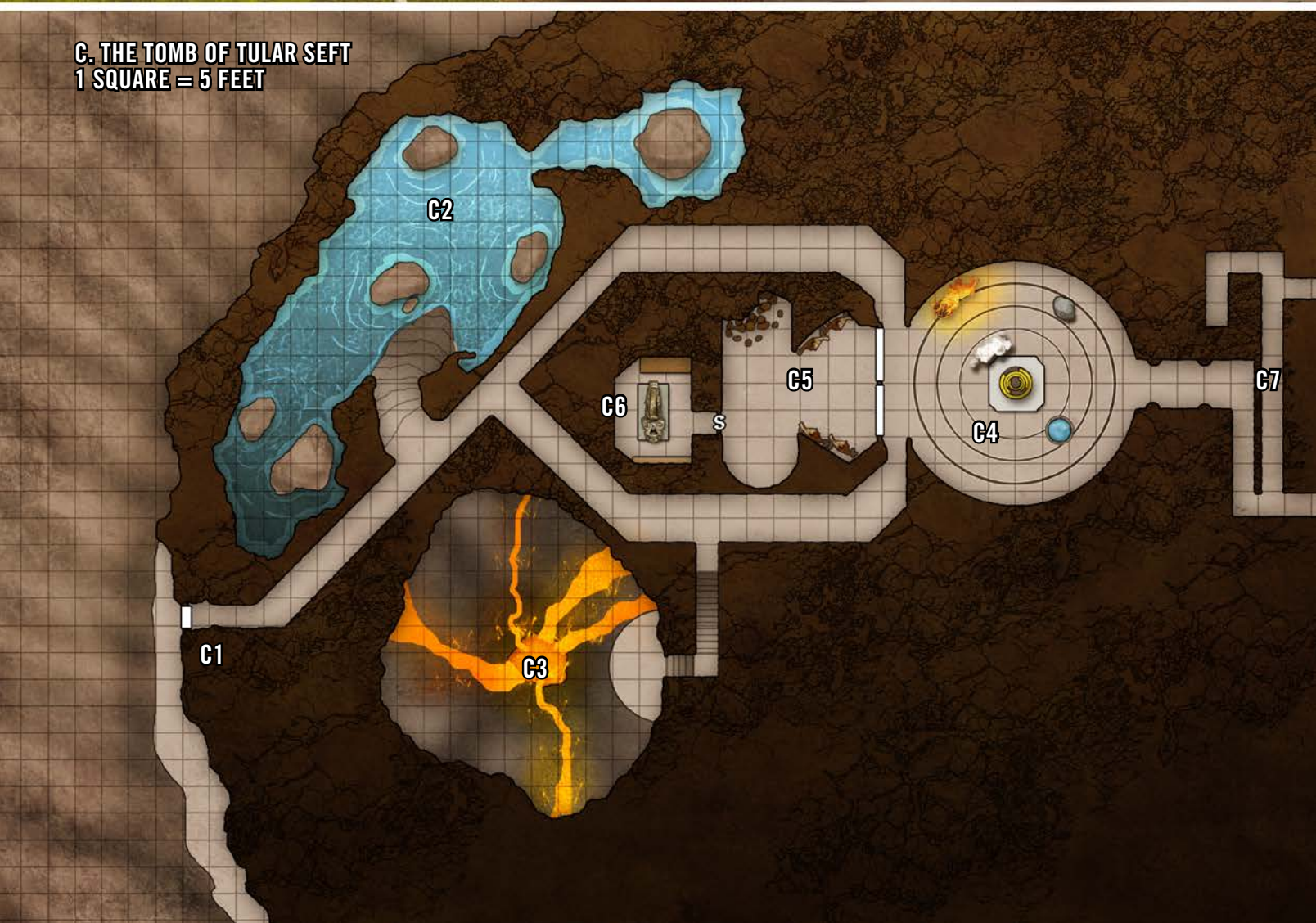
Each player should choose a background from those listed on pages 38–39 of the *Pathfinder Playtest Rulebook*.

LANGUAGES

Inform the players that three languages—Auran, Gnoll, and Ancient Osiriani—might open up additional role-playing or investigatory opportunities in this chapter, and that they have access to those languages. However, knowledge of these languages isn't required to complete "In Pale Mountain's Shadow."

PURCHASING GEAR

Each character begins with one 3rd-level item, two 2nd-level items, one 1st-level item, and 300 sp to spend on additional items. As the GM, you determine which items the PCs can start with, but they should have access to at least all common items of their level or lower. The characters already know each other, so they can pool their money to buy items.

B. PALE MOUNTAIN FOOTHILLS
B5
B4
B3
B2
B1
N
W
E
S
C. THE TOMB OF TULAR SEFT
1 SQUARE = 5 FEET
C2
C6
S
C5
C4
C7
C1
C3

between planes together, and Tular put Mabar in charge of building a tomb they would share. Unfortunately for Mabar, as Tular grew older, his focus in his studies shifted. He began studying distant locations beyond the Elemental Planes, such as other dangerous planes and strange places in the Material Plane. During this deviation in his usual research and study, he succumbed to the influence of the Dominion of the Black. This foul influence changed Tular, twisting his mind in far-flung directions and making the man more cruel and apathetic toward his friends and cohorts. Turning on Mabar, Tular imprisoned his former friend to exploit the janni's innate connection to the planes.

Tular was already nearing death when he secured a *countdown clock*, and he knew it. Tular had learned of the magical devices and began searching one out from the onset of his obsession. He had his cohorts move his occult materials—and his prisoner, Mabar—into the tomb the janni had constructed for him. Tular then invoked a bizarre ritual that he believed would allow him to contact the Dominion after death, creating a magic portal to a distant realm by using Mabar's life force. His plan was doomed, however, and resulted in his tomb becoming a nexus of elemental energies. Today, Mabar remains trapped in the tomb along with Tular's corpse, peering into the blackness.

Gathering the Party

When this adventure begins, the PCs have been summoned to a meeting in the trade town of Kelmarane in the nation of Katapesh. Overrun years ago by bandits, gnolls, and slavers, the town spent most of its recent history in ruins. Within the last year, the town was reclaimed by adventurers and is now well on its way to seizing its original mantle as a prosperous trading post. While several buildings in town remain in ruins, numerous work crews toil at repairing the major structures, while canvas roofs on smaller buildings provide temporary lodgings. It's in one of the larger buildings, an ancient church, that the PCs have been hired to meet with a representative of the Esoteric Order of the Palatine Eye: Lady Kamisora Vord. Lady Vord offered an enticing sum of 45 gp for each PC, along with the promise of great treasures to be found on the journey.

As in "The Lost Star," give the players a few moments to introduce their characters to each other, but in this case the PCs have already been an adventuring group for some time. If the players want to come up with a story for their previous exploits, let them, but those adventures shouldn't give them a particular advantage in this chapter. In any event, the PCs' previous exploits are what brought them to Lady Vord's attention, and her mysterious invitation and her offer of a healthy payment have drawn the PCs to this, their latest mission.

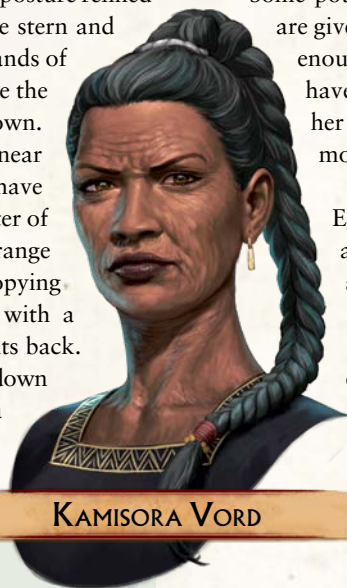
Lady Kamisora Vord hails from Ustalav, where the Esoteric Order of the Palatine Eye is based. Camadus Gatea, a low-ranking member of the organization and Vord's assistant, stands at attention near the door to invite in or repel visitors. When the characters arrive, he stops them at the door and requests that they tell him their business coming here. He identifies himself as Vord's attendant if necessary. Once the PCs produce their invitation or otherwise convince him they're meant to meet Lady Vord, read or paraphrase the following.

> The young man steps aside and gestures toward the descending stairwell in the center of the room. Clearing his throat, he loudly proclaims, "You enter the distinguished presence of Lady Kamisora Vord, First Throne of the Esoteric Order of the Palatine Eye. My lady, your mercenaries have arrived."
>
> A bemused voice echoes out from the stairwell. "Camadus, I might remind you we are meant to be a secret society. Perhaps next time you might refrain from speaking our name in front of every common laborer.
>
> "Send my new arrivals down to meet me, if you please."

Playtest Goals

In this chapter, the focus of the playtest is to increase the complexity of combat encounters and to test players with challenging terrain features, strange hazards, and deadly traps. Many of the encounters become more difficult due to the characters' disadvantage from the terrain. Do your players find these challenges fun and interesting, or do such encounters become a slog? How long does it take to play out these types of challenges at the table? When the group gets into a battle in difficult terrain or with other environmental challenges, does it make that fight too difficult? By determining how best to handle encounters made more difficult than normal due to these conditions, you can help hone Pathfinder's environmental and hazard rules to be more balanced and fun to play!

Lady Vord is sitting on a small stool, her posture refined despite her surroundings. Her features are stern and she keeps her black hair, streaked with strands of gray, pulled back into a long braid. Despite the heat, she wears an embroidered black gown. An expensive lantern rests on the floor near her, illuminating a door that appears to have once been barred. A metal plate in the center of the door is covered with etched lines in strange patterns. Lady Vord is in the process of copying those runes into a journal emblazoned with a golden scarab beetle with a single eye on its back.

As the PCs arrive, she sets the journal down and rises to meet her guests, speaking in a heavy Ustalavic accent.

"The Order appreciates your presence here today. I trust the figure in my summons was sufficient to secure your services. I have been studying with great interest a report from one of our agents, a Magnimarian named Keleri Deverin, regarding an object of interest. We have reason to believe a treasure of particular import lies under Pale Mountain, in an ancient complex called the Tomb of Tular Seft. I had been planning an attempt to retrieve it for some time, but I've received word that dangerous cultists called the Night Heralds seek this treasure as well and have sent forces to retrieve it. Hence, I secured your services rather than waiting for agents of the Order to arrive.

"Fortunately, we have an advantage they do not. The majority of the Tomb of Tular Seft is a labyrinth that, while compact, is difficult to navigate and is rumored to be filled with traps and beasts. Keleri's research, though, reveals a back entrance to the tomb hidden in the lower slopes of Pale Mountain. This entrance is said to appear as a blank stone within a 'scar' across the mountain. With luck, you can reach the tomb and secure the treasure before the Night Heralds can even enter the complex. Camadus has prepared a map of the route.

"The object I require is a large gemstone with a series of shifting hieroglyphs glowing within it. If you can read the hieroglyphs, you will note they represent a number that appears to be counting down. Keleri's text refers to this gemstone as a 'countdown clock,' but other than the rumors of it being hidden in Tular Seft's tomb, we know little about its specific location within. All other treasures you find in the tomb are yours to keep, though the Order may wish to purchase any items vital to our efforts at an especially fair price."

KAMISORA VORD

At this point, Lady Vord is willing to answer any questions the PCs might have. She has little information about the *countdown clock* or the tomb other than what she's already revealed, but she can speak on other subjects that might be interest or assistance to the PCs. Some potential questions and Lady Vord's answers are given below. If you don't feel like the PCs have enough information to begin the adventure, have Lady Vord be more forthcoming with her information or prompt the PCs to ask more questions.

What does the Order do? "We in the Esoteric Order of the Palatine Eye seek to awaken our inner divinity with knowledge and self-awareness. We also collect treasures pertinent to this mission, or, in cases like this one, seek to keep dangerous treasures out of the hands of those who would commit great offenses if they had them."

What's Pale Mountain? "It is a volcanic mountain in the Brazen Peaks, near the border with Osirion. Pale Mountain stands above its nearby fellows, and it is occupied by many dangerous creatures—notably gnolls."

Why do you want to stop the Night Heralds? "The Heralds worship horrid things from beyond the stars and seek to bring these monsters to our world. The specifics of their mission are unknown to me, but I do know they flee from the enlightened path and see only destruction in our future."

Whose tomb is this? "It holds the remains of Tular Seft, a scholar of the elemental planes—realms of air, earth, fire, and water. The object of our interest has no elemental properties, so why an elemental scholar would keep it, I cannot say."

What are you doing with this door? "Simply studying the construction of the magical defenses. They once sealed something in the chambers below."

What are you doing in Kelmarane? "My primary duty comes in securing trade deals for the nation of Ustalav. I was finishing up such an arrangement in southern Osirion when this town was freed. I came here to take advantage of a reestablished trade route. That my efforts led me to such a fortuitous location speaks to the veracity of the Order's practices."

When the PCs have finished asking their questions, Lady Vord sends them upstairs, where Camadus hands them items to assist the PCs with their quest. These items include a carefully drawn map showing the direction to the tomb's back entrance, an ivory scroll tube containing a *scroll of fly*, and a *+1 magic weapon*. Because Lady Vord hired the characters specifically, the weapon should be a type of your choice that benefits someone in the party that focuses on combat or a PC who needs an extra edge. Avoid issuing a ranged weapon if possible, as it can skew the results of this playtest. She also offers to arrange camels for the PCs to use on their journey, if they'd like.

As the characters leave, Camadus passes on final words in Lady Vord's name.

"May you find speed and insight on your course. For performing this service, you will earn a good name within the Order—a reward greater than the coin, whether you believe it so or not."

Camadus then speaks a short phrase of farewell in another tongue, though he won't reveal what this phrase means, as it's a code word among the order. A character who knows the Osiriani language interprets it to mean, "Seek and you shall find."

PALE MOUNTAIN FOOTHILLS

In the northwest corner of Katapesh, Pale Mountain towers over the other mountains of the Brazen Peaks that divide Katapesh from Osirion. This volcanic mountain is a prominent landmark and a dangerous place. Not only is the land treacherous and hard to navigate, but a gnoll called the Carrion King has been gathering the various gnoll tribes of the mountain under his command. Fortunately for the PCs, the Carrion King has little interest in the areas they'll be traveling through to reach Tular Seft's tomb.

Reaching the Mountain

Unless they're exceptionally slow, the characters should be able to beat their Night Herald rivals to the tomb. However, the more efficient their trip, the more time they'll have to rest up between battles on the way and, once at the tomb, to prepare for the Night Heralds or make their escape. You'll need to track the amount of time the player characters spend on the journey from Kelmarane to the old road marked on Camadus's map (area **B1**) so you know when their rivals will show up. Go to the section called The Night Heralds Arrive (see page 32) once 9 days have passed.

Getting from Kelmarane to Pale Mountain takes several days. The journey, roughly 80 miles, crosses mostly flat terrain, low hills, and old roads; see the rules for Travel Speed on page 316 of the *Pathfinder Playtest Rulebook* to determine the base rate of travel for your party. One PC can lead the group in a given day by attempting a DC 18 Survival check to determine the progress the group makes. On a success, the travel time is unaffected. On a critical success, the group finds shortcuts and travels 4 miles more than normal. A failure indicates that the group has trouble with the terrain and moves 4 miles fewer than normal (or 8 miles fewer on a critical failure).

The truly difficult part of the journey starts once the group reaches the old road marked on the map of the foothills. A typical group of adventurers can make the journey from Kelmarane to the foothills in area **B1** in about 5 days. Note that for the purposes of this chapter, random encounters do not occur during this journey—the focus of the playtest should remain on the encounter areas around and within the tomb, as detailed on the following pages.

Overall, it's an 8-mile journey to the hidden back door to the tomb from this point on the old road, but the course is so forbidding that it should take the typical group about 2 days to travel this distance. The path on the map from Lady Vord leads through scrubby vegetation (area **B1**) to a wet, sandy area at the mouth of a small river running down from the mountain (area **B2**). It then follows the river past a gnoll encampment (area **B3**), requires climbing a series of cliffs and steep inclines up the side of Pale Mountain (area **B4**), and culminates at a trail cut into the mountainside that leads to the tomb.

IMPORTANT RULES

Because much of this adventure involves exploring, it would be helpful for you to become familiar with the rules for exploration mode, found on pages 316–317 of the *Pathfinder Playtest Rulebook*. These rules are pretty flexible, and you have many different potential ways to run an exploration. We want to hear how you ran this segment in our survey! The most important rules that affect movement are as follows: Difficult terrain costs 5 extra feet of movement to enter a square. Greater difficult terrain costs 10 more feet of movement. Hazardous terrain can harm creatures in it. Uneven ground requires Acrobatics checks to keep from falling. Inclines must be Climbed to be traversed.

Rules for specific terrain appear in this adventure, and you can also find additional information about environments and hazards beginning on page 340 in the *Pathfinder Playtest Rulebook* and in the *Pathfinder Playtest Bestiary*.

Using Mounts

The group can ride mounts, such as the camels Lady Vord provides them, to make their trip more expedient. This helps a great deal on the way to the foothills, but most mounts don't help that much once the group arrives at the foothills. Once the group reaches area **B4**, mounts need to be left behind. Special mounts, such as a paladin's steed ally or an animal companion, might be able to make the journey, but their master will need to walk next to the mount rather than ride it up the mountainside, and a PC might still need to leave a mount behind when the group climbs the cliffs.

Preparing for Battle

The combat encounters in the first portion of this chapter take place in the foothills of Pale Mountain. These encounters should feature interesting terrain for the PCs and enemies to navigate and take advantage of, but maps are not provided. Instead, a general description of each area's battle site is given in the encounter, and you can use a blank Pathfinder Flip-Mat or another blank grid to prepare for these encounters as detailed.

LORE SKILLS

Anytime an adventure calls for a skill check to Recall Knowledge, allow the characters to use appropriate Lore skills in place of the listed skill. For example, in area **B1**, a player character with the Gnoll Lore skill could use it when attempting the check to know that gnolls often brand and pierce their hyena pets. You might also want to lower the DC by 1 or 2 if the skill is particularly fitting, as it would be in this example.

Testing this format for presenting relatively minor encounters on the way to a primary adventure site that is mapped (the Tomb of Tular Seft) is also an experimental part of the playtest process. Make sure to let us know in your feedback for this chapter how this worked out at your table. Did you enjoy the opportunity to build battlefields on the fly for your encounters, or do you prefer having published maps to accompany every fight in the adventure, even if it means fewer encounters are included?

B1. The Gnarled Foothills — Low 4

The looming presence of Pale Mountain rises to the northeast, its slopes rugged and forbidding. The overgrown tracks of an old road wind through the foothills, but no visible trail leads up into the tangles of scrubs and brambles between here and the dormant volcano's slopes.

This area between the old road and the edge of the sand flats (area **B2**) is a 2-mile-wide expanse of difficult terrain composed of thorny underbrush.

Use the following parameters when preparing the map for this encounter: The entire area consists of difficult terrain save for three 10-foot-diameter clearings of normal terrain, two 5-foot-by-10-foot patches of brambles (these areas of difficult terrain are also hazardous, dealing 1d4 piercing damage to anyone who moves into a square of them), and four spindly trees. Each tree takes up a single 5-foot square, is 20 feet tall, and provides cover only if a character Takes Cover behind it.

Lurking in the undergrowth in this region are packs of hyenas, snickering scavengers who won't hesitate at the opportunity to add fresh meat to the day's menu. The PCs encounter one such pack midway through the gnarled foothills.

The hyenas and hyaenodon that dwell in this area once belonged to a pack of gnolls who were slain. While these creatures have reverted to life in the wild, they retain the savage attitudes and violence trained into them by their previous owners. Each of the hyenas bears an old ragged collar, brands, and a few primitive piercings that all suggest the hyenas were once partially domesticated. By succeeding at a DC 14 Society check to Recall Knowledge, a PC identifies these adornments as typical of gnoll war hyenas.

If the hyenas detect the characters (usually because the characters' Stealth check results are less than the hyenas' Perception DCs or because the characters aren't trying to be stealthy), they attempt to sneak up on the group, using Stealth for initiative; otherwise they use Perception.

1 HYAENODON — CREATURE 3

Pathfinder Playtest Bestiary
Initiative Perception +8 or Stealth +9

2 HYENAS — CREATURE 1

Pathfinder Playtest Bestiary
Initiative Perception +5 or Stealth +6

B2. Sand Flats — Low 4

The brush, brambles, and trees have receded, replaced by a sandy flatland bordered by the winding tributaries of a river. The small river flows down from the slopes of Pale Mountain, cascading over a few small waterfalls. The widest fork of the river passes to the north of the sand flats, most of which are saturated with enough water to be packed hard.

The distance from the overgrown foothills (area **B1**) to the gnoll camp (area **B3**) is 2 miles of desert terrain.

When preparing for this encounter, use a blank Pathfinder Flip-Mat or another blank grid. A 20-foot-radius patch of quicksand (see Quicksand on page 25) is located in the center of the map.

These sand flats are also the territory of a large, insectile creature called an ankhrav. The burrowing monster spends most of its time buried in the sands next to the quicksand, where it conceals itself and waits until potential prey stumbles into the quicksand. On the round after the PCs encounter the quicksand, the ankhrav bursts out of the sand to attack.

Note that before the ankhrav attacks, its subtly disguised nest-mound might give it away. As the PCs approach, anyone who succeeds at a DC 17 Perception check notices the strange low mound, after which a PC who succeeds at a DC 19 Survival check can recognize it as an ankhrav lying in wait.

1 ANKHRAV — CREATURE 3

Pathfinder Playtest Bestiary
Initiative Stealth +10

Hazards: Numerous patches of fine grit are spread throughout the sand flats. These patches are quicksand, one of which has attracted the ankhrav as an easy way to secure its prey. Quicksand is a complex hazard that requires rolling initiative.

QUICKSAND — HAZARD 3

Pathfinder Playtest Bestiary

Initiative Stealth +11

A search of the ankhrav's nest reveals a desiccated, half-eaten adventurer's body. The body still grips a battered backpack containing two *minor healing potions*, a set of expert-quality thieves' tools, and 300 sp.

B3. Gnoll Camp — High 4

> A crystal-clear river rushes down the gentle slope of the land. On the river's far side, three ratty tents constructed of leather and sticks stand near the river's bank. A couple of crude fishing rods are propped up along the river, and the logs and ashes of a large bonfire rest near the tents.

Unlike the previous two encounters, this encounter gives the PCs a chance to prepare beforehand—they can see the gnoll tents from afar and have the option to approach from any direction and use any tactic, including skirting the encounter entirely.

When you set up the map for this area, draw a 20-foot-wide river down the center of the map. Place the three 10-foot-square gnoll huts on one side of the river and the 10-foot-square smoldering bonfire on the far side of the huts from the river. As the encounter begins, the PCs approach from the river's far side. The encampment is on a slope, and the river passing directly to the west of the camp flows southward rapidly. Anyone who ends their turn in the river is moved 10 feet downstream. A PC can swim through the river by succeeding at a DC 15 Athletics check. The ground on the PCs' side of the river is flat, but the ground on the far side slopes upward away from the river.

Two gnolls from the Al'Chorhaiv tribe have set up a small camp near the river's edge while they wait for their allies—a hunting party (including their packleader) that went up the mountainside days ago but has yet to return. While they wait, the gnolls mill about the camp, increasingly restless and nervous. They've taken up fishing while they wait for the others to return, though they find the practice boring. The gnolls aren't keeping a diligent watch, so the PCs should be able to observe them from the far side of the map. Any PC who succeeds at a DC 15 Perception check and speaks Gnoll understands that the gnolls are bored, nervous, and distracted. The gnolls all have a white streak dyed in their hair and wear necklaces or other adornments made of scorpion carapaces. By succeeding at a DC 16 Society check, a PC can identify these as hallmarks of the Al'Chorhaiv tribe, a group of nomads known to travel with scorpions and other poisonous creatures.

The PCs can sneak around the encampment automatically by adding 2 hours to their overall travel time, or along the borders of the map with successful Stealth checks. If the gnolls spot them, or if the PCs simply decide to attack, the gnolls yip excitedly as the arrival of fresh meat brings out their bloodlust and promises an end to their boredom. One of the three tents is a kennel for a trained giant scorpion that eagerly joins the fight alongside its beloved gnoll keepers.

2 ELITE GNOLL WARRIORS — CREATURE 3

Chaotic
Evil
Gnoll
Humanoid
Medium

Perception +9, darkvision
Skills +2, **Acrobatics** +5, **Athletics** +7, **Stealth** +7, **Survival** +9
Languages Gnoll
Str +3, **Dex** +1, **Con** +1, **Int** –1, **Wis** +0, **Cha** –1
Items battle axe, leather armor, shortbow with 20 arrows
AC 18, **TAC** 17; **Fort** +8, **Ref** +9, **Will** +6
HP 44
Speed 25 feet
◆◆ **Melee** battle axe (sweep) +10, **Damage** 1d8+5 slashing
bite (agile) +9, **Damage** 1d4+5 piercing
◆◆ **Ranged** shortbow +9 (deadly 1d10), **Damage** 1d6 piercing
Pack Attack The gnoll deals 1d4 extra damage to any creature that's within the reach of at least two of its allies.
Rugged Travel A gnoll ignores the first square of difficult terrain it moves into each time it Steps or Strides.

1 GIANT SCORPION — CREATURE 3

Pathfinder Playtest Bestiary
Initiative Perception +8 or Stealth +7

B4. A Treacherous Climb — High 4

The distance from the gnoll camp (area **B3**) to the hidden entrance to the tomb (area **B5**) is 4 miles of difficult terrain, including treacherous cliffs and steep inclines that must be climbed. A PC can identify the easiest climb up the mountainside by succeeding at a DC 17 Survival check. The party can attempt new Survival checks as often as they want, but each attempt requires spending 4 hours scouting the landscape.

If at least one PC succeeds, the entire party can follow an easy pathway that alternates between short cliffs (usually 15 to 20 feet tall each), shallow inclines that go on for 30 to 45 feet at a time, and walkable flatter sections. This easy pathway allows the PCs to make the journey to area **B5** without having to attempt any Athletics checks.

If no PC succeeds at this check, the party is forced to follow a difficult pathway consisting of steeper ledges with taller cliffs (25 to 40 feet tall) and fewer walkable portions. On this difficult pathway, each PC must succeed at a DC 19 Athletics check to clamber up the treacherous route. Each roll adjusts the overall travel time required to reach area **B5**, and the results of each PC's check are cumulative. Each critical success reduces overall travel time by 15 minutes, while each failure increases the overall time by 15 minutes. A critical failure increases the time by 1 hour, and that PC takes 15 bludgeoning damage from a fall.

This stretch of mountainside is the hunting ground of a dangerous manticore, a ravenous creature that is the primary reason the gnoll hunting party from area **B3** has been missing.

One-third of the way up the mountainside to area **B5**, the PCs come across the site of a battle. Strewn across the rocky ground are the corpses of a half-dozen gnolls who have been dead for 2 days, their bodies riddled with large bony quills and partially eaten. A PC can identify the quills as manticore quills by succeeding at a DC 22 Nature check.

Two-thirds of the way up the mountainside to area **B5**, the manticore notices the PCs unless the entire party is stealthy in their exploration. If the manticore notices them and attacks, set up the map for the battle to show a 20-foot-wide path traveling in a gently winding route from one edge of the map to the other. Choose one side of this map to be down and one to be up—these sides are steep mountain slopes (see the *Pathfinder Playtest Bestiary*).

Zakfah

The manticore considers the side of Pale Mountain its exclusive hunting territory and attacks anyone it sees climbing the mountain. It uses Stealth for initiative; it tries to approach as quietly as it can from the air. The manticore prefers to keep its distance, lobbing spines rather than engaging in melee.

1 MANTICORE **CREATURE 6**

Pathfinder Playtest Bestiary

Initiative Stealth +7

B5. Approaching the Tomb High 4

A narrow path hugs the mountainside. Small puddles of water pool along the path's outside edge, fed by water dripping from the upward slope. A prominent overhang protrudes above, sheltering the path from the sun and elements. The end of the path is set into the mountainside, in a rocky wall scored with multiple tool marks.

The map for this encounter is a narrow path cut into the mountainside leading up to the hidden door, as shown in area **C1** on the map on page 20.

The overhang that conceals the back entrance to the tomb also provides some of the only shelter on the mountainside. The surviving members of the Al'Chorhaiv gnoll hunting party retreated to this location after losing several of their number to the manticore. Now, the gnolls await a chance to escape back to their packmates in area **B3**.

The leader of the group is a gnoll sergeant named Zakfah. The hunting party initially came here pursuing rumors about a treasure-filled tomb; Zakfah hoped to find the treasure to impress a local gnoll warlord known as the Carrion King and earn a place in the House of the Beast, the Carrion King's headquarters. Unfortunately for the gnoll hunting party, the manticore has devastated its numbers. The gnolls managed to reach the tomb's hidden entrance but have been unable to get through the door (area **C1**). They increasingly feel that their best plan of action is to retreat.

After hunkering down to avoid the manticore for a few days, the gnolls have become hungry and desperate. They viciously attack anyone who comes near, eager for food and supplies. Canny characters can convince the gnolls to let them by if they can prove the manticore is dead.

ZAKFAH **CREATURE 4**

Chaotic Evil Gnoll Humanoid Medium

Perception +10, darkvision

Skills +3, Athletics +9, Intimidation +11, Stealth +9, Survival +9

Languages Common, Gnoll

Str +4, **Dex** +3, **Con** +2, **Int** +1, **Wis** +2, **Cha** +1

Items composite shortbow with 20 arrows, hide armor, longspear
AC 19, **TAC** 16; **Fort** +7, **Ref** +10, **Will** +9
HP 65
◇ **Attack of Opportunity**
Speed 25 feet
◆ **Melee** scimitar (forceful, sweep) +11, **Damage** 2d6+4 slashing
bite (agile) +10, **Damage** 1d4+4 piercing
◆ **Ranged** composite shortbow +10 (deadly 1d10), **Damage** 2d6+2 piercing
◆ **Bark Orders** (auditory, lingual) The sergeant issues a command to reposition its allies. Any allies who hear and understand this order can take a reaction to Step.
Pack Attack The gnoll deals 1d4 extra damage to any creature that's within the reach of at least two of its allies.
Rugged Travel A gnoll ignores the first square of difficult terrain it moves into each time it Steps or Strides.

3 GNOLL WARRIORS — CREATURE 2

Pathfinder Playtest Bestiary
Initiative Perception +7

THE TOMB OF TULAR SEFT

When the elemental scholar Tular Seft began planning for his death, he designed a tomb grounded in the principles he discovered in his studies of the Elemental Planes. Devoting much of his remaining wealth to the task, he employed his janni ally, Mabar, as architect for this tomb, choosing Pale Mountain as the site so as to tap into the potent forces of earth and fire in the region.

It took decades to construct the tomb, with its specialty rooms, winding labyrinth, and complex elemental defenses and qualities. Before the tomb could be completed, Tular abandoned his study of the Elemental Planes in favor of researching the Dark Tapestry. His obsession drove him to betray his friend Mabar, imprison the janni in the tomb, and then exhaust the rest of his funds acquiring documents and artifacts related to the Dark Tapestry, including a rare magical item: a *countdown clock*.

When he knew he had little time left, Tular turned the innermost sanctum of his resting place into a shrine to the Dominion of the Black, theorizing that he would be able to live beyond death by contacting these aliens. His plan failed in the end, and today, this sanctum remains a bleak testament to his folly and betrayal.

The player characters can find Mabar in area **C4**. If they free the janni, he can help them understand what happened to Tular Seft and even join them in defending against the Night Heralds.

TRACKING TIME

On average, a group of PCs should have time to fully explore areas **C1–C6** of the tomb before the Night Heralds make it through the labyrinthine eastern reaches of the complex. Remind the PCs how long they have left when they enter the tomb so they know whether they'll have any time to rest before or during their explorations.

C1. THE BACK DOOR

> The mountain ledge narrows significantly before coming to an end below an overhanging shelf of rock, but directly to the east, a door of solid black stone has been set into the mountainside. At one point, the door may have been difficult to notice, but recent damage, as if inflicted by poorly crafted tools, has made the mysterious doorway quite apparent.

The back entrance to the tomb is sculpted from a block of solid stone to look like a part of the mountainside. The gnolls found the door and fiddled with it from time to time, attempting to get it open with their crude methods. Score marks from their tools make the presence of the door clear, but they've not had time to breach the defense.

Trap: The door is not locked, but the lack of any convenient handle makes opening it difficult. A hidden latch concealed in the rocks near the door's base can be found with a successful DC 17 Perception check, while a *detect magic* spell can reveal magic in the vicinity of the latch, though the magic actually comes from a magical trap that protects the door. If the latch is activated, so is the trap. Likewise, smashing the door open triggers the trap. If the trap is deactivated via Thievery or other means, the latch opens the door with ease. Without the latch, the door can be smashed through. It has Hardness 14 and can take 2 Dents before breaking.

ELECTRIC LATCH RUNE — HAZARD 4

Pathfinder Playtest Bestiary

C2. CHAMBER OF THE SUNKEN STONES — HIGH 4

> This large cavern seems to have been dedicated to the ideals of water and earth. A set of rough natural stairs leads down from the main passage into this natural chamber. Holes piercing the walls of the cave allow rivulets of water to filter into this room, flooding the floor. Several flat-topped stones project above the water.

The water and stones don't present much of a challenge apart from being preferred terrain for the room's elementals. The water in this room is 15 feet deep but calm, requiring a PC to succeed at a DC 12 Athletics check to Swim through, and as the water is siphoned in and recycled from the Elemental Plane of Water, the room will never flood. A PC must succeed at a DC 10 Athletics check to Climb onto one of the rocky outcroppings from the water. Each outcropping rises just 1 foot above the water's surface, or 5 feet for the stones in the northeastern chamber; a creature in the water can Take Cover behind these larger stones.

Tular Seft bound two guardian elementals into this room—one from each of the planes the chamber is associated with. The earth elemental is concealed as a pile

of rubble on the southernmost of the protruding rocks, while the water elemental is dispersed in the water to the north. They attack as soon as someone comes within the distance the elemental can move with one action. The earth elemental appears in the rough form of a stony jackal, while the water elemental takes the shape of a wide-mouthed fish made from foam and water.

1 LESSER WATER ELEMENTAL — CREATURE 5

Pathfinder Playtest Bestiary
Initiative Stealth +11

1 MINOR EARTH ELEMENTAL — CREATURE 3

Pathfinder Playtest Bestiary
Initiative Stealth +7

The tomb's magic interacts strangely with a slain elemental. When an elemental is defeated, its body condenses into an *elemental gem* with a rune of elemental power inscribed on it. This gem can be used in area **C4** to make opening the sealed chamber easier. These can also be activated like *elemental gems*, though they summon the elemental they condensed from rather than the usual type. Activating the gems destroys them, making them no longer useful in opening the inner chamber.

C3. Chamber of the Burning Sky — High 4

> A set of stairs tiled in red and white leads upward and around a bend into this chamber. The stairs emerge onto a small landing before an almost spherical room. This chamber appears to be a tribute to air and fire, with a high, domed ceiling and bowl-shaped floor. Small lava flows trickle from the walls to collect in a pool below, from which a column of smoke pours up to roil against the ceiling above.

As with the water in area **C2**, the smoke and lava in this chamber are siphoned in and recycled from the Elemental Planes, so they never overwhelm or overflow the room's balance.

The domed ceiling is 25 feet above the ledge at the room's entrance. With a similar shape, the floor is fairly smooth and hard to traverse, requiring a successful DC 18 Athletics check to reach the ledge from below. The lava slowly flows down via a few narrow streams, exiting through a 10-foot wide hole in the center of the floor.

A creature coming within 5 feet of a lava stream takes 1d4 fire damage, and another 1d4 fire damage at the start of each of its turns while it remains there. Coming into contact with a lava stream deals 5d6 fire damage, as does remaining touching or standing in one at the start of the creature's turn.

As in area **C2**, this room is inhabited by two elementals tied to the theme of the room. These are in their natural forms and attack anyone who enters. The fire elemental takes the form of a burning horse with fiery spines on its back. The air elemental takes the rough shape of a vulture made of mist and smoke, and it avoids the lava, preferring to hover in the middle of the room, away from the walls if possible.

1 LESSER FIRE ELEMENTAL — CREATURE 5

Pathfinder Playtest Bestiary
Initiative Perception +12

1 MINOR AIR ELEMENTAL — CREATURE 3

Pathfinder Playtest Bestiary
Initiative Perception +7

Treasure: As in area **C2**, when an elemental is defeated, its body condenses into an *elemental gem* with a rune of elemental power inscribed on it. These gems can be used in area **C4**. If a gem falls to the ground below, a character might have to carefully avoid the lava or use a spell like *mage hand* to retrieve it without taking damage.

C4. Chamber of Planar Alignment

> A straight hallway separates an ornate stone door on the western wall from a circular room to the east. The door has no latch or lock and depicts a sagacious man in relief. He wears a robe and holds a book and quill across his chest. Golden accents inset in the stone give him a sense of majesty, but his eyes are gone—gouged out of the stone and filled in with tarry black paint.
>
> The circular room has a low ceiling and four concentric circles on the floor around a dais in the center. Each of these circles features a glowing object or phenomenon within its ring. The outermost ring emits an orange flame from a small spout. The next ring has a protrusion—a translucent purple stone that glows faintly. The third ring is inset with a small, circular basin that shines with green light from below the water. The innermost ring includes a small vent that pours forth vapor shot through with white light.
>
> The dais inside the fourth ring supports a complex device of brass atop a metal pole, covered in dials and complex runes.

The doorway to the east leads to the labyrinth (area **C7**), while the sealed stone door opens into area **C5**. The device on the dais in the center of the room operates the stone door's locking mechanism, which can't be opened in any other way (short of long-term manual labor or strong magic like *disintegrate*).

The locking device consists of four complex dials built into the room's floor, each of which corresponds to one of the Elemental Planes. The alignment of each dial can be determined by the elemental emblem that adorns it, and a close examination of each dial's decoration reveals the

presence of dozens of strange runes and a small faceted indentation that seems to be built to house a single (but missing) gemstone.

The magical traditions and equations spelled out by the runes on each elemental emblem can be deciphered with some difficulty; a PC who succeeds at a DC 25 Arcana, Nature, Occultism, or Religion check can decipher the equations on a single emblem. Placing an *elemental gem* of the same elemental theme as the emblem in the faceted indentation causes several of the runes to pulse and glow while the others fade from view—this reduces the DC of the skill check to 20. After each failure to decipher the runes, a character can spend 1 hour studying the formulas to figure out where she went wrong, after which she can attempt a new check to attempt to decipher the runes.

Mabar

A PC can sabotage an elemental emblem with a successful DC 19 Thievery check, further removing the "dead end" equations. This sabotage can be performed only once per emblem, but once an emblem is successfully sabotaged, the DC to correctly decipher its equations is reduced by 4.

Once an emblem is deciphered, the character can select the correct components of each equation by touching them in the correct order, causing them to shimmer and glow. Entering in the correct code is an activity that takes 1 round, after which that ring rotates counterclockwise so that the elemental emblem lines up between the stone door and the central dais. Once all four are in a line, the double door to areas **C5** grinds open.

Characters who have little patience or skill at figuring out this complex lock may have to wait for the Night Heralds to arrive and decipher the puzzle and then ambush them once they've gotten the stone doors open.

Special: From this side, there is no direct entrance to the east into the tomb's labyrinth, nor any real indication of a chamber beyond at all. To those approaching area **C4** from the labyrinth side (like the Night Heralds will soon do), the outer wall of area **C4** appears as a spiraling pattern of hieroglyphs that must be solved as a puzzle. Each failed attempt results in a blast of elemental energy to punish the potential tomb robber, but a success causes the spiral of hieroglyphs to fade and the 10-foot-wide section of wall between the labyrinth and area **C4** to crumble to dust, allowing entry to the labyrinth.

The secret door is very well hidden, requiring a PC to succeed at a DC 29 Perception check to find. For the purpose of this playtest, it's best if the PCs don't discover this alternate entrance into the tomb, since the traps and guardians of the labyrinth on the other side are beyond the playtest's scope or interest.

C5. Mabar's Prison — High 4

Glowing hieroglyphs shimmer on the walls of this oddly shaped room. Now and then, one of the hieroglyphs shimmers and changes, or it even vanishes altogether, while new glowing glyphs manifest elsewhere where none were previously. Slowly rotating circular diagrams are interspersed with these glowing runes. Along the walls lean the rigid, immobile shapes of several mummified human bodies, the mechanism by which the dead remain upright not immediately apparent. Portions of the room appear unfinished, with building materials still cluttering the corners. Another body floats limply near the ceiling of the far room, wearing a metal mask over its face. It doesn't look mummified like the others, and its long hair dangles limply.

A character who can read Ancient Osiriani can automatically see that the vast majority of the hieroglyphs on the walls represent numbers. A PC who succeeds at a DC 15 Perception check realizes that the numbers on the wall in fact represent a single enormous number that appears to be in the process of counting down. Unfortunately, damage to the wall combined with the room's incomplete nature means the countdown wall is somewhat faulty, and thus it's frustratingly impossible to determine when the countdown began or what and when it's counting down to. (Tular Seft originally envisioned this chamber as something of a shrine to the Dominion of the Black and the upcoming invasion in 4718 AR, but he perished before he could complete this eldritch work of art.)

The door to the Tular Seft's actual resting place is hidden within the room's western wall. A PC who attempts to find it by Seeking requires a successful DC 23 Perception check. If Mabar's freed, he shows the characters the entrance to this room.

The living figure hanging near the ceiling is Tular Seft's betrayed friend Mabar (see Freeing Mabar on page 30 for more details).

When the PCs first enter this room, the chamber's guardians are immediately noticeable to the PCs. Not all of the mummified figures held rigid against the walls are truly dead. Four of them—one in each corner of the room—are undead mummies that lurch to dusty "life" as soon as they spot intruders. The mummies pursue foes throughout the tomb.

4 MUMMY GUARDS — CREATURE 2

Pathfinder Playtest Bestiary
Initiative Perception +7

Freeing Mabar

Mabar is suspended in the air by the same telekinetic magic that holds the non-undead mummies upright, while the metal mask he wears has kept him in suspended animation for the thousands of years since he was betrayed by his friend Tular. He floats in the middle of the room, 10 feet off the ground and 10 feet from the ceiling above. A PC who succeeds at a DC 12 Perception check can pick out faint shimmering distortions in the air surrounding Mabar—physical manifestations of the magic holding him in place—and a PC who succeeds at a DC 17 check to Identify Magic reveals something even more interesting: that the magic has decayed in power over the centuries.

Freeing Mabar is a simple task. When the mask covering his face is removed, he emerges from his suspended animation. At the same moment, the telekinetic forces keeping him (and the non-undead mummies) aloft finally falters, dropping him and the dead bodies to the floor. Mabar takes 5 bludgeoning damage from this sudden plummet, but this damage won't be enough to kill the janni (a PC can catch him as he falls, preventing the damage with a successful DC 15 Acrobatics check). The mask, once removed, loses its preservative powers and becomes nonmagical.

Once freed, Mabar gasps for breath but recovers quickly. To the janni, no time at all has passed, but the irrefutable visual proof of how the chamber he's spent the past several thousand years in has aged makes him realize how long he's been in stasis. Mabar is destined for many months of difficult emotional ordeals as he acclimates to his new life, but for now, Mabar's thoughts haven't quite caught up to this new reality, and he can answer the PCs' questions. He isn't sure how long he's been imprisoned, or why the PCs chose to free him, but he assumes that they aren't his enemies unless the PCs take pains to prove him otherwise. If confronted, he attempts to flee rather than fight, using *plane shift* to retreat to the Plane of Air.

If the PCs wish to speak with Mabar, they'll need to be able to speak either Ancient Osiriani or Auran to hold a conversation. If they can, likely questions and his answers are summarized below.

Who are you? "I am called Mabar. You may not have met a janni before; we are of geniekind."

Why were you imprisoned here? "This is the tomb of Tular Seft, who was once my friend. He imprisoned me here—stealing my natural magic to use toward realizing his ambitions. Once his mind became enthralled with the dark places between the stars, all people became but tools to serve his own purposes."

Who was Tular Seft? "When we first met, he was studying the Elemental Planes and the connections between those planes and our Material Plane. He was respected and wealthy, and he was a dear friend to me. This tomb was my monument to the man he was. But when his eyes peered away from the Elemental Planes and to darker realms, that all ended. I don't know the man interred here."

Where is Tular Seft's body? "Beyond this wall, I believe. There's a hidden door to a chamber meant to be his resting place. I can open it for you, though I dread what you might find."

What are the runes on the walls? "I'm not familiar with them. I suspect they are connected to the dark places between the stars and the forces that dwell therein."

What are the dark places between the stars? "I do not know, other than that there are things that dwell there that can infect the mind and transform the soul. My friend became infected by these entities in this way, and I can only hope that, in death, he escaped their clutches."

If the PCs ask for his aid, Mabar is willing to assist the characters in their exploration of the tomb, and even in confronting the Night Heralds when they arrive. He doesn't have a weapon, and if he isn't given one, he assists in battle only with his *enlarge*, *invisibility*, and *shrink* innate spells. He fights viciously against the Night Heralds once he realizes they have ties to the dark places between the stars. Though he has no desire to die, he will sacrifice himself if it means stopping these servants of darkness.

MABAR — CREATURE 4

Male janni (*Pathfinder Playtest Bestiary*)
Initiative usually Perception +9
Skills +4; Acrobatics +9, Arcana +10, Architecture Lore +12, Crafting +11
Languages Ancient Osiriani, Auran
◆ **Melee** fist +11 (agile), **Damage** 1d4+4 bludgeoning

C6. Chamber of Contemplation

> This tiny, bleak chamber has unfinished stone walls. One wall is lined with shelves filled with musty, leather-bound books.
>
> In the center of the room, an ancient mummified body sits at a stone-topped table, posed as if in meditation or study. Iron bars hold the preserved corpse in place, with cuffs holding its moldering hands on either side of a massive gemstone, within which glowing hieroglyphs shift and change. A brace across the front of the body holds the face forward, staring at the far wall with empty eye sockets. On that wall, a large, ornate mirror frame is filled with a sheet of absolute darkness—black beyond night.

The body at the desk is the worldly remnant of Tular Seft, mummified by a combination of the passage of time and several elixirs and tinctures the man drank before binding himself to this seat to stare into the darkness. Tular had hoped that when he died, his soul would travel

into the Dark Tapestry through the ornate frame, but his preparations were incomplete and his fate after death was one of torment for betraying his friend Mabar.

The frame on the wall was a focus for a scrying ritual Tular used just before he died, in hopes that his soul would travel through the focus into the Dark Tapestry upon his death. The magical link to the depths of space has mostly faded over the years, but enough remains that the first PC to look into the frame might attract some unwanted extraterrestrial attention.

GLIMPSE OF THE DARK TAPESTRY — HAZARD 3

Magical | Trap

Stealth DC 19 (trained) or *detect magic*

Description This scrying mirror is a window into the blackness of the Dark Tapestry.

Disable Thievery DC 17 (trained) to cover the mirror without looking into it

◆ **Minor Mind Quake** (enchantment, fear, mental, occult)

Trigger A creature looks into the mirror frame.

Effect The darkness in the frame churns and then winks out, leaving the mirror within the frame reflective once again. An alien mind from the Dark Tapestry brushes against the thoughts of the triggering creature, who must attempt a DC 23 Will save.

Success The creature feels discomfort, as if being watched.

Failure The creature becomes frightened 1 and doesn't automatically recover for 24 hours.

Critical Failure The creature is confused for 1d6 rounds, and afterward is frightened 1 for 24 hours and can't recover automatically.

Within the chamber lie the few treasures Tular Seft chose to keep rather than spend away to fuel his growing obsession with studying the Dark Tapestry.

The musty, leather-bound books are all focused on lore concerning the Dark Tapestry and the depths of space, most couched in such obscure ritual language that the reader must succeed at a DC 23 Occultism check to Read Esoterica to understand them. The actual contents of these books will be invaluable to the Esoteric Order of the Palatine Eye in helping them prepare for their continuing opposition to the Night Heralds, but they have little bearing on this chapter of the adventure. Four of the books are particularly large and are 1 Bulk each, and the remaining 30 books are each light Bulk, adding up to a total of 3 Bulk. The PCs can split up the books among themselves to share the load of carrying them.

Several magic items amid the books are of more immediate use to the PCs. Tular's +2 *scimitar* still hangs from his belt. The hilt is adorned with four jewels, each representing a different element. A creature wielding the weapon can spend 10 minutes activating it to cast *endure elements* once per day, without needing to Invest the Item. Other items include a *lesser staff of fire*, a *scroll of gust of wind*, and a *scroll of stoneskin*.

TOUCH OF CORRUPTION

As an antipaladin, Henah has the *touch of corruption* power, which she can cast using her Spell Points.

TOUCH OF CORRUPTION — POWER 1

Necromancy | Negative

Casting ◆◆ Somatic Casting

Range touch; **Target** one willing living creature or one undead creature

You infuse a creature with negative energy, damaging a living target or healing an undead target. If you use *touch of corruption* against a living target, you deal negative damage equal to 1d4 + your spellcasting modifier if you succeed at a melee touch attack, and the target takes a –1 conditional penalty to AC for 1 round. On a willing undead target, you restore 1d4+2 HP, and if the target is an ally, it gains a +1 conditional bonus to AC for 1 round.

Heightened (+1) Increase the amount of damage (or healing to undead) by 2d4.

Once the frame's link to the Dark Tapestry is expended, it becomes a nonmagical but ornate empty mirror frame. The frame is worth 1,250 gp but is very awkward to carry (Bulk 4).

The most important treasure in the room, though, is the strange gemstone with the shimmering hieroglyphics within—this is the *countdown clock* the PCs have been sent to retrieve. The runes in the gemstone are much simplified versions of the numbers counting down on the incomplete walls of area C5, but deciphering them to understand the countdown's target date still requires several days of observation and study. For now, the *countdown clock*'s target number remains a mystery, but assuming the PCs hand the device over to Lady Vord at the adventure's end, the Esoteric Order swiftly determines that the date the *countdown clock* is aimed toward is the year 4718 AR. This *countdown clock* was created by Ramlock near the end of his time on Golarion and is a level 20 magic item.

C7. The Labyrinth

Tular Seft's tomb extends deep into the underground to the east, consisting of a complex, winding maze filled with beasts and traps. Though the Tomb of Tular Seft isn't well known overall, the labyrinth entrance far to the west is better known than the back entrance the PCs used. It also has a more direct route via old trade roads, rather than the wild trek required to get through the shortcut. Numerous dead-end passages, false doors, and other tricks make the labyrinth a frustrating journey. The Night Heralds know only of this entrance to the tomb, and they have come prepared for its dangers.

The contents of this larger complex are beyond the scope of this adventure, and if the players become intrigued by what lies beyond and want to explore further, you have

two choices. You can add additional encounters for the players to explore, or you can choose the moment the PCs want to further explore as the point at which the Night Heralds arrive. For playtest purposes, it's best to take the second option.

THE NIGHT HERALDS ARRIVE

As noted earlier, the Night Heralds take 9 days to arrive at the tomb. The last 2 days of this journey consist of passing through the labyrinth. Once they complete their journey through the labyrinth, these adversaries reach area **C5**. Once they recognize the tomb has already been looted, the Night Heralds search for the culprits and set upon them.

Henah

Resting or Escaping

If the PCs complete their task with time to spare, they can take things slow and face the Night Heralds after setting up defenses, resting, and perhaps securing Mabar's help.

If the PCs instead to retreat and avoid the Heralds entirely, their best option is to return the way they came. If the PCs have a big head start, they can evade the Night Heralds entirely, but if they attempt to escape with only a day's head start or less, the Night Heralds are able to catch up to them. Escaping is especially difficult if the group chooses to take a large number of the items from area **C5** with them, since the extra Bulk could slow them down.

All that said, if the PCs manage to escape the tomb and completely evade the Night Heralds, that's valuable information to pass along when giving your playtest feedback! This lets us know if the PCs have sufficient abilities to safely navigate hazards and difficult terrain at this level.

Late to the Party

If the player characters run out of time and arrive at the tomb after the Night Heralds, they find areas **C4** and **C5** open and ransacked. Mabar has been slain. The *countdown clock* is gone, as are most of the tomes on the Dark Tapestry from area **C5**. At your discretion, if the PCs arrive the day after the Night Heralds, they can encounter them in area **C5** as the cultists have just finished resting and recovering and are preparing to leave. Otherwise, the Night Heralds escape—this too is important information for us to learn during your playtest feedback! We believe that we've provided the PCs with enough resources and abilities to get through their challenges in sufficient amounts of time, but if that's not the case, we want to know so we can make adjustments.

The Night Herald Mercenaries — Extreme 4

The timing of when the Night Heralds attack is left to you, assuming their arrival at the tomb takes place at some point when the PCs are within the complex. Feel free to time their attack to be dramatic, perhaps with the cultists arriving just as the PCs are leaving.

The Night Heralds in this group are veteran mercenaries who have completed several missions for the cult in the past. The antipaladin Henah leads them and accepted this task at the request of Necerion. The other members of the group don't know the full details of their mission—just that they're to follow Henah's orders.

If interrogated, Henah can be Coerced into giving up Necerion as her employer. She knows that he's a member of the Night Heralds and that the cult wants to gather as many *countdown clocks* as they can, but she's not sure what significance the items hold for the group or how the Night Heralds plan to use the devices. She does know they already have several *countdown clocks*.

The remaining members of the mercenary group are Randwik (a female human wizard and aspiring scholar of the Dark Tapestry who hopes that by serving on this mission she'll earn an invitation into the Night Heralds), Libar (a female human ranger who was hired specifically to aid the group's journey through the harsh terrain, although she has no real interest in the Night Heralds or the Dark Tapestry), and Motek (a male human cleric devoted to Rovagug who signed on with the group after learning they were going to explore Pale Mountain, a site that holds specific religious significance to his church).

Only Randwik knows much about the Dark Tapestry, and if the PCs manage to capture her, she's eager to use what she knows as threats and to issue dire predictions of the fates awaiting the PCs and all of their friends and families. She knows that the *countdown clocks* are all synchronized with other *countdown clocks*, some of which are larger walls, sundials, or other time-keeping objects. She can tell the PCs that the wall in area **C5** is an incomplete *countdown clock*. Her theory is that if all of the *countdown clocks* are brought together in one place, they might be able to grant someone immortality by separating them from the flow of time—a theory that's compelling, but false.

The group's first priority is to spread out into the room so they aren't bottlenecked in the labyrinth door. If they have time to cast spells before combat, Randwik usually casts *invisibility* on Libar. As soon as he's in position, Motek casts *bane* to punish the PCs.

HENAH THE ANTIPALADIN — CREATURE 5

Chaotic Evil Human Humanoid Medium

Perception +8
Languages Common
Skills +4, Athletics +11, Intimidation +13, Religion +11
Str +4, **Dex** +1, **Con** +1, **Int** +1, **Wis** +0, **Cha** +2
Items expert composite shortbow with 10 arrows, *+1 full plate*, *+1 greataxe*, *moderate healing potion*

AC 20, **TAC** 16; **Fort** +12, **Ref** +8, **Will** +9
HP 78
Vengeful Strike (reaction)
Trigger A creature within your reach critically hits you.
Effect Make a melee Strike against the triggering creature at a –2 penalty before the opponent rolls the damage for the triggering critical hit. If your attack hits, the target is enfeebled 1 for the remainder of its turn, or enfeebled 2 for the remainder of its turn if your Strike was a critical hit. The enfeebled condition ends immediately if the creature makes a Strike against another creature. If Retributive Strike incapacitates or kills the triggering creature, the triggering critical hit deals no damage.

Speed 15 feet
Melee (one action) *+1 greataxe* +13 (magical, sweep), **Damage** 2d12+4 slashing
Ranged (one action) composite shortbow +10 (deadly d10), **Damage** 1d6+4 piercing
Divine Powers 2 Spell Points, DC 19, attack +12; **3rd** *touch of corruption* (1 Spell Point, 5d6+2)
Insidious Corruption The damage from Henah's *touch of corruption* is increased to deal d6s instead of d4s.
Terrifying Strike (two actions) Henah Strikes. On a hit, the target is flat-footed for 1 round and frightened 1. On a critical hit, the target is flat-footed for 1 round and frightened 2.

LIBAR — CREATURE 3

Mercenary scout (*Pathfinder Playtest Bestiary*)
Initiative Perception +10

MOTEK — CREATURE 3

Cleric of Rovagug (*Pathfinder Playtest Bestiary*)
Initiative Perception +8

RANDWIK — CREATURE 3

Vile necromancer (*Pathfinder Playtest Bestiary*)
Initiative Perception +5

CONCLUDING THE CHAPTER

Once the player characters collect the *countdown clock*, they should return it to Kamisora Vord back in Kelmarane. She's interested in keeping the artifact and the Dark Tapestry tomes and offers the PCs a reward of 50 gp for them all. If the PCs are interested in continuing their association with the Esoteric Order, Lady Vord also agrees to sponsor them in joining the organization. The players won't be returning to playing the characters in this chapter, so exactly what fate lies in store for these characters is up to you and your group to decide.

Mabar willingly accompanies the group back to Kelmarane and conveys the information he knows to Lady Vord. He's thankful that she sent someone into the tomb, though he has little desire to stick around in Kelmarane or continue to accompany the PCs. Once he feels his obligations are completed, he uses *plane shift* to take a solo sojourn on the Plane of Fire.

Although the characters who participated in this chapter won't be returning to *Doomsday Dawn*'s storyline, the players, of course, are in it to the end. The most important thing the players should learn over the course of this chapter is that the Night Heralds are a dangerous enemy and that they're seeking the *countdown clocks*. This may not seem especially important, but much more will be revealed about the cult and their plans in the next chapter!

AFFAIR AT SOMBREFELL HALL

More than 20 years ago, at the wide-eyed age of 16, a brilliant young academic named Verid Oscilar enrolled in the Sincomakti School in Ustalav's city of Rozenport. The passionate young noble threw himself into the field that fascinated him: Osirionology. But as he rose to heights of academic achievement far beyond those of his peers, he began noticing hints of a strange influence. After an expedition to a tomb covered in bizarre and discordant sigils, his fixation grew. Verid collected his field notes, locked himself away with a dozen esoteric tomes, and emerged 2 weeks later a changed man. Verid became convinced that the Dominion of the Black was threaded throughout Ancient Osirion and, indeed, even life on Golarion today. Despite everyone regarding his ideas as strange at best, Verid changed the focus of his studies to the Dominion—a force he summarized as "malignant entities that rule the lightless place between stars."

WHERE AND WHEN

"Affair at Sombrefell Hall" takes place in 4711 AR, during the events of the Carrion Crown Adventure Path. Specifically, this tale unfolds while that Adventure Path's player characters are investigating the ruins of the corrupted prison in *Pathfinder Adventure Path #43: The Haunting of Harrowstone*. The events described in these pages are isolated from those of Carrion Crown, however, both in the sense that they take place far from that Adventure Path's action and that both adventures' player characters don't need to meet or even know of each other's existence. The entirety of "Affair at Sombrefell Hall" is set in the titular manor on the southwestern shore of Lantern Lake in Ustalav's Versex County, and the horrors that happen there need not spill beyond its grounds.

Verid spent nearly every waking hour researching the Dominion of the Black, including what it wants from Golarion, and how it might be warping existence to serve a final, terrible goal. When the darkness threatened to overwhelm him, he took refuge in the holy teachings of deities who stand against the void, including Desna, Sarenrae, and the empyreal lord Black Butterfly, who sees the Dark Tapestry as the worst of all evils.

Now an esteemed professor in abstruse studies at his alma mater, Dr. Verid Oscilar is regarded as a foremost scholar on the Dominion of the Black. Academics and heroes regularly seek out the doctor's knowledge, and he is happy to oblige as he can, though some have begun whispering that Dr. Oscilar's research has begun to weigh on him. In truth, Verid has weathered his burden remarkably well—that is, until 6 weeks ago, when an insomnia-fueled research session coincided with a ritual performed in the region by the Night Heralds.

Working with a sinister representative of the Dominion, a brain collector named Ilvoresh, this local cell of undead Night Heralds performed a ritual intended to contact none other than slumbering Ramlock on distant Aucturn, in hopes of learning more about the *countdown clocks* and the coming apocalypse. Their attempt caught Ramlock's attention, but his dreams reached out instead to Verid Oscilar, attracted to his life's work studying the Dominion of the Black. Enraged at the ritual's failure, Ilvoresh slaughtered the cell's vampiric leader and consumed her brain. In so doing, he found himself now able to control the other undead cultists. Thus empowered, Ilvoresh turned his attentions to divining to whose mind Ramlock's dreams were diverted.

For the professor, the ritual's effects were all too apparent. Soon, he began experiencing terrifying episodes of disassociation, wherein Verid was aware of his actions but had no control over them. Worse, while disassociated, he performed terrible rituals using languages he couldn't comprehend and communicated with creatures he recognized only as emissaries of the Dominion of the Black. At a loss to explain what was happening, the professor knew only that a touch of the Dominion was inside him, and that it wanted full control. Terrified and worried about hurting those around him, Verid kept his condition a secret while he desperately searched for a way to reverse the effects.

When the professor began losing hours at a time to this plague—always during the night—he took a sabbatical from Sincomakti and retreated to Sombrefell Hall, an ill-used estate on the shores of Lantern Lake that has been in the Oscilar family for generations. He brought only a few trusted assistants with him, including his graduate assistant and close friend, and a cache of research materials. At night, the doctor barricades himself in Sombrefell's basement, hoping to stymie his wicked alter ego. During the day, Verid makes increasingly odd requests of his compatriots in his attempts to end his condition. It pains him to keep the truth hidden from his friends, but, perhaps foolishly, Verid still hopes to reverse his condition and figure out the Night Heralds' schemes without anyone becoming the wiser.

Verid doesn't know, however, that his sinister alter ego has managed to contact Ilvoresh. With his cultists now undead minions, the vampiric brain collector waits only for an unholy alignment of stars to bless his foul journey so that he can consume the doctor's brain and inherit Ramlock's dreams. That night approaches, and the professor, unwittingly, has very little time to spare.

LEVEL

Each PC should be 7th level.

BACKGROUNDS

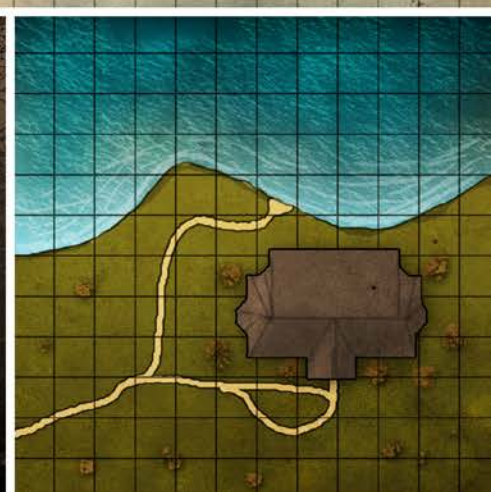
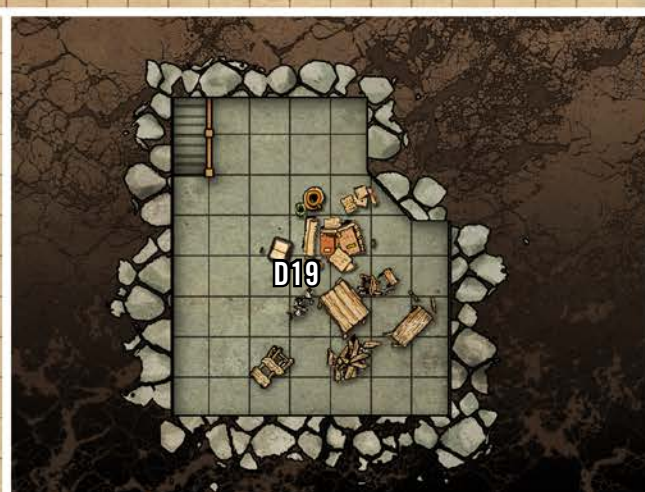
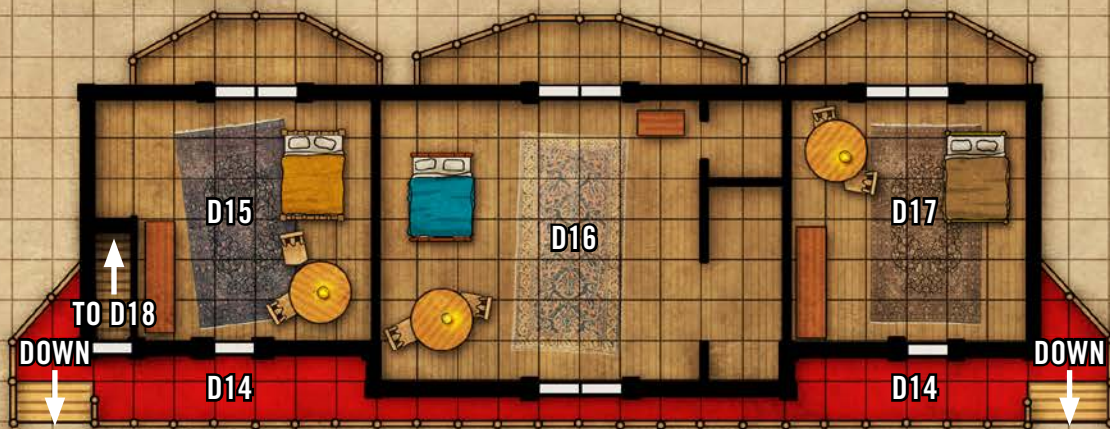
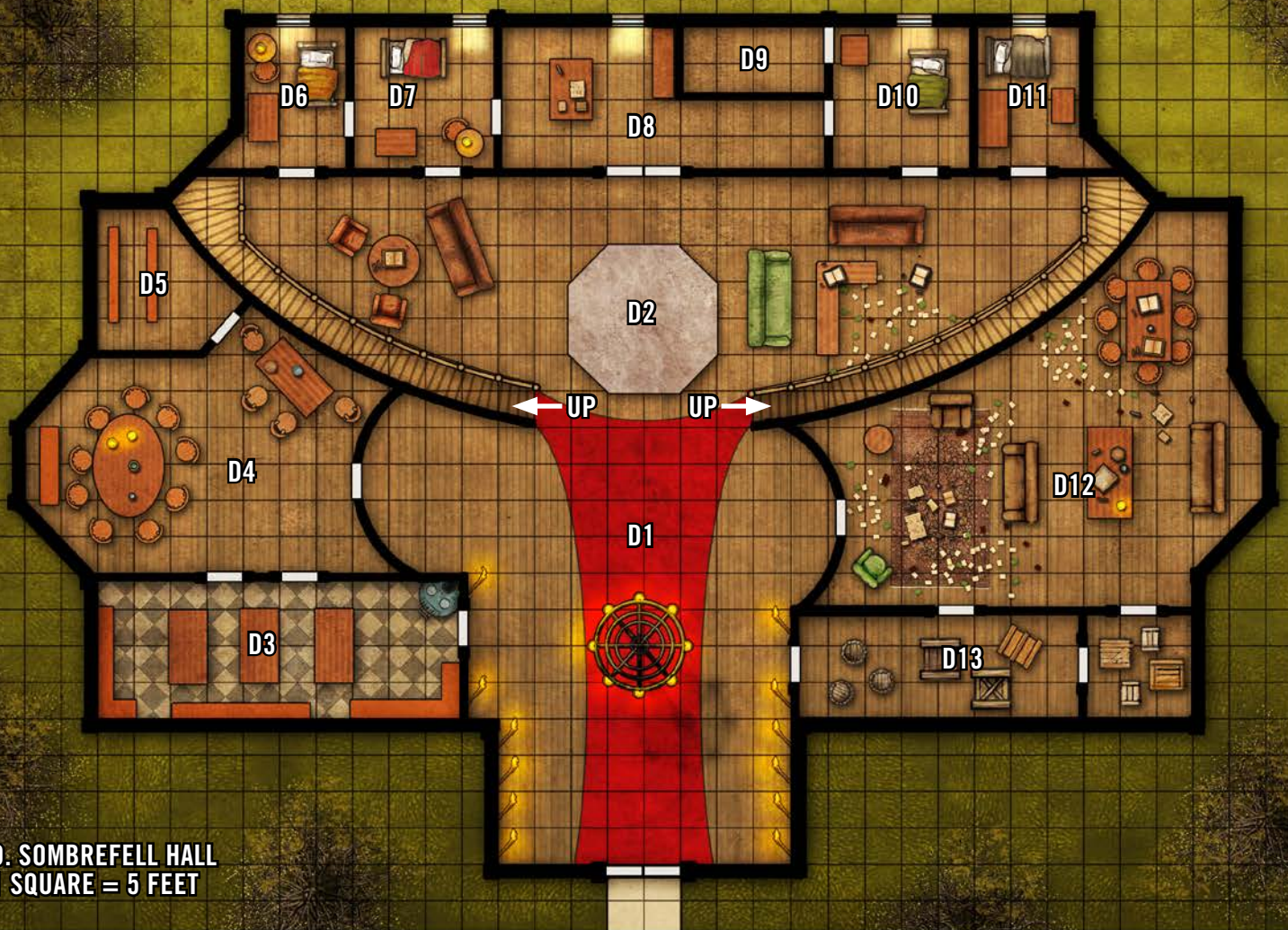
Each player should choose a background from those listed on pages 38–39 of the *Pathfinder Playtest Rulebook*. Each player should also come up with details on how their characters know each other and serve the Esoteric Order of the Palatine Eye.

CLASSES

At least two players should create clerics capable of channeling positive energy. All other characters should be of classes capable of healing to some extent, such as bard, druid, paladin, or a sorcerer that uses divine spells.

PURCHASING GEAR

Each character begins with one 6th-level item, two 5th-level items, one 4th-level item, two 3rd-level items, and 125 gp to spend on any additional items. One character in the group also starts with one *+2 magic armor* of your choice. Allow characters who already know each other to pool their money to buy items.

D6
D7
D8
D9
D10
D11
D5
D2
D4
UP
UP
D12
D1
D3
D13
D. SOMBREFELL HALL
1 SQUARE = 5 FEET
D15
D16
D17
N
W
E
S
TO D18
DOWN
DOWN
D14
D14
D18
TO D14
D19

CREATING CHARACTERS

Thanks to the actions of the player characters in the previous adventures, the Esoteric Order of the Palatine Eye has learned that the *countdown clocks* are counting down to 4718 AR. Further, the order knows that the Dominion of the Black is involved in this sinister countdown, but the Order's members are at a loss to explain the horrors that might come of it. Naturally, they've decided to seek out Dr. Verid Oscilar for help finding answers.

For this chapter, the players will create a new set of heroes. While you should encourage your players to create characters who have a vested interest in combating the Dominion of the Black or who have a distinct tie to the Esoteric Order of the Palatine Eye, the most important thing is that every character should be capable of using healing magic or effects.

GETTING STARTED

Once the players have built appropriate PCs and determined their backgrounds, distribute Handout #1 (see page 39). Exactly how each PC receives this missive is up to you, but each character should be somewhere in Rozenport when a messenger hands them a rolled-up scroll bound with a wax seal. Impressed on the seal is the telltale symbol of a scarab beetle with a single eye on its back—the sigil of the Esoteric Order of the Palatine Eye.

As it happens, Oathday is tomorrow. Give the players a moment to introduce their characters to each other as they gather at the Hungry Fog; once they are acquainted, they should set out for Sombrefell Hall at once.

SOMBREFELL HALL

The manor known as Sombrefell Hall is located about 25 miles northeast of Rozenport across mostly flat terrain. Though the surroundings become more remote the further one ventures, the house is situated at the end of a fairly well demarcated road abutting the lake. The journey to Sombrefell Hall is uneventful and takes the better part of a day—assume the PCs arrive at the manor in late afternoon, then begin the adventure by reading the following text.

> Like the smoky exhalation of a mighty beast, a billowing haze blankets the lake. A massive mansion rises from the mist, with sweeping roofs topping two-and-a-half vaulted stories. The manor's grand entrance consists of mahogany double doors, a white-marble knocker fashioned in the likeness of an angel-shaped ankh, and a tarnished bronze placard that reads "Sombrefell Hall."

The main entrance to Sombrefell Hall leads to area **D1**. A PC who succeeds at a DC 12 Religion check recognizes the ankh as a symbol of Sarenrae and that other iconography on the manor is Sarenite in nature—the family who built this house likely once worshiped the goddess of the sun, redemption, and healing.

If the PCs explore the grounds (either before knocking or later in the day), they might note that the building is two stories, with a small attic-like structure jutting from the manor's southwest side. An access path leads to the back of the house, though the house's foundation is only about 10 feet away from the lakeshore. Behind the house, three balconies on the second floor jut over the shoreline. The manor's backside has windows too small for a person to crawl through, and overgrown ivy cascades along trellises from the balconies to the ground. On the ground floor of the west and east sides of the building are huge picture windows that reveal a posh dining room (area **D4**) and a cluttered salon filled with dusty furniture and all manner of books, boxes, papers, and other clutter (area **D12**).

If the PCs poke around the grounds for longer than a few minutes, a dark-haired woman emerges onto the balcony closest to them and shouts that visitors must knock on the main doors to be received. This is Dr. Oscilar's trusted

PLAYTEST GOALS

The ultimate playtest goal of "Affair at Sombrefell Hall" is to measure the healing resources of a party of healers against several successive waves of level-appropriate undead. For playtest purposes, you should record the rate at which PCs use healing resources: track the length of each encounter as well as how many healing spells and items the PCs use in each fight. The pacing of this adventure is a steady climb to a relentless wave of undead, followed by a final encounter with a powerful vampire. It should quickly become apparent whether the PCs' resources are enough to sustain them throughout the adventure's narrative.

As with any published adventure, you should run "Affair at Sombrefell Hall" as you see fit. However, the story is intended to provide an experience of survival horror. As such, you are encouraged to run a dire and deadly game!

graduate assistant, Lucvi Yasterna, though she won't converse with the PCs until they've properly announced themselves at the manor's entrance.

When the PCs knock there, Lucvi answers.

> One ancient door creaks open, revealing a carpeted entryway lit with dozens of weeping candles in floor sconces. Standing in the doorway is a grim-faced woman with several loose scrolls still in one hand. Unimpressed, she says, "Well, yes?"

Lucvi Yasterna

Lucvi knows the professor has taken pains to avoid all of his rote duties at the Sincomakti School until he finishes his ongoing research, and so she knows the PCs are unexpected visitors. If the PCs simply ask to see the professor, she denies them entry. "The professor is very busy and is not to be disturbed," she explains. "Come to think of it, so am I. Excuse me while I get back to work."

However, if the PCs explain why they've come to Sombrefell Hall, Lucvi is more hesitant to turn them away. She knows that Verid tries to aid the Order however he can. As long as the PCs aren't completely overbearing and disrespectful, they should be able to convince Lucvi of the importance of their mission, at which point she sighs but opens the hall's double door and waves them into the home's receiving room (area **D1**). "Wait here," she instructs them before heading toward the salon (area **D12**). "I'll bring the professor to you."

After several minutes, a disheveled-looking man in his forties emerges from area **D12**. His eyes are bleary and his clothes are rumpled, but he still strides up to the PCs with vigor and extends his hand. "I'm Dr. Verid Oscilar," he says, looking each character in the eye. "But you knew that, didn't you? Please, explain to me why you've come."

At this point, the PCs can explain their mission from the Order however they wish. It's also probable that they have several questions for the professor. Note that while he is careful not to tell outright falsehoods, all of his answers contain shades of untruths and evasive tactics he's constructed to protect both himself and his students at Sombrefell Hall. Each time the doctor answers a question, roll a Deception check for him (his skill modifier is +13) to determine whether he fails to exceed any PC's Perception DC. Those he fails to deceive can tell that something doesn't quite add up about what he's saying but that he's not exactly lying, either. To successfully confront the professor about his answers, the PCs need evidence of the situation in Sombrefell Hall—see Confronting the Professor on page 42 for more information.

Likely questions and the professor's answers are below.

Why did you leave the Sincomakti School? "I'm not as young as I used to be. This subject I study—the Dominion of the Black and all of the Dark Tapestry—it drips with knowledge of elder, alien things that hate life as we know it. To look into such eldritch horrors is to dabble in nightmares, and I suppose I've peered into the void one too many times. My mind is restless and disturbed, you could say. I've come here to retreat from the pressures of daily life on campus and to do some reading and research uninterrupted."

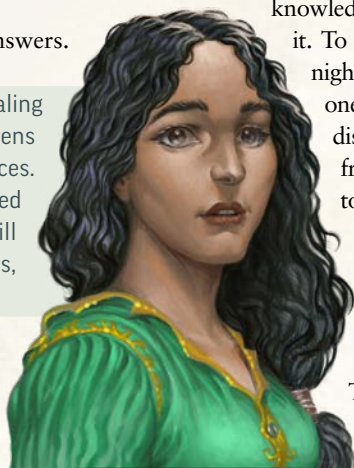
What is this place? "Sombrefell Hall has been in my family for a very long time. I suppose it's a little dusty, isn't it? No one has lived here for fifteen years—not since my grandparents entered Pharasma's embrace. There are rooms for you upstairs, if you'd like to stay the night. I'm afraid I can't turn my attention to anything you ask until I finish the research before me, and that won't be until tomorrow morning—at the earliest."

What are you researching? "It's complicated. Not even I fully understand it, so forgive me if my explanation is lacking. I'm looking into a thread I've never before pursued—I didn't even know it existed until recently. It has to do with the workings of the Dominion of the Black through agents here on Golarion. It's vital that I learn more, because dark forces may be at work as we speak. But I can't even know what help to seek, if need be, until I finish this work."

Will you help the Esoteric Order research the countdown clock found in Katapesh? "I am sensitive to the Order's needs. And to its worries. No one wishes to understand and thwart the Dominion more than I, and I will help you learn more about your *countdown clock*. But trust me when I say I'm very close to solving my own problem. Once that's handled, I'll help you."

Why won't you help us now? This matter is urgent! "Oh, I believe you. But if I don't solve the problem facing me now, I may be of no use to anyone. I can't say more, but I need only a little more time. A few days, perhaps, maybe even just the rest of the night, if we're fortunate. You've had a long journey—perhaps you'd like to rest in the bedrooms upstairs, and I'll update you with my progress once you're refreshed?"

No matter how urgently the PCs question the professor, he keeps his cool and continues to suggest that they rest and reconvene with him later. This is a stalling tactic, as Verid truly believes that he's close to solving his problem. In reality, he knows only that the Night Heralds have somehow managed to remotely plant a "mental seed" of a terrible entity within his soul. He believes that if he determines how that happened, he can reverse the process without anyone knowing how close he's come to oblivion.

After they talk, the professor summons Lucvi from her studies in area **D12**. He asks her to escort the PCs upstairs, where three bedrooms are available for them to stay while

Faithful Friend,

Your sisters and brothers of the esteemed Palatine Eye are at a loss. We need the assistance of a specific expert, but to get it, we need help from you.

To explain. Two years ago, from an ancient tomb in Katapesh, our agents retrieved a most sinister gem called a "countdown clock." Within its facets dance shifting runes that chronicle the elapsing of time. Our scholars have recently determined that these shifting runes are counting down to the year 4718. This is most alarming, for we have also learned that this year is of significance to the Dominion of the Black. Beyond these facts we are stymied.

The Palatine Eye needs to know what we face. Specifically, we need the research skills of one Dr. Verid Oscilar, Ustalav's foremost expert on the Dominion of the Black and a vaunted professor at the Sincomakti School. The good doctor, however, is not currently in residence at his post.

We understand that he has gone on sabbatical at Sombrefell Hall, a manor his family owns on the southwestern shores of Lantern Lake. Some say that his research into the Dominion has left his mind in a delicate state. If there were any other way to thwart the evils we face, we would not bother the good professor.

Along with a group of like-minded and pious partners we've assembled, we ask you to travel to the professor's retreat and humbly ask for his aid. Dr. Oscilar knows the horrors the Dominion would visit on us better than anyone, and he respects those dedicated to thwarting them. He is, by all accounts, a religious man, and we hope he will listen to you, consider our case, and help us, despite the rest he is undertaking.

Please, without delay, meet the others at the Hungry Fog in Rozenport Square on Oathday, noon. Gather the supplies you need and travel together to Sombrefell Hall to beseech the doctor. Should he agree, we can arrange for a stipend to pay him for his services. We humbly request your utmost alacrity—we know not what we face, nor is there time to waste.

Yours in the Unexplained,

The Eye

Player Handout #1

they wait for the professor's assistance (the professor and researchers are staying in the smaller bedrooms on the ground floor in areas **D6**, **D7**, **D10**, and **D11**).

Regardless of the time of day, Lucvi tells the PCs that they are welcome to the house's amenities, including the sparsely stocked kitchen (area **D3**) and dining room (area **D4**). However, she asks them to avoid the salon (area **D12**), since that's where the academics are conducting their research.

The PCs have the rest of the day to explore the manor before **Event 1** (see page 42) happens. See Exploring Sombrefell Hall for more details.

The Research Assistants

When he realized his strange affliction, the doctor paid some local trade workers to quickly restore Sombrefell Hall, took a sabbatical from Sincomakti, and arranged through the school for three of his most trusted students to accompany him on his so-called "research retreat."

The professor needs all of the help he can get with his research, since it's so difficult and esoteric. However, he doesn't wish to shock his students; therefore, the three students staying at Sombrefell Hall do not know the truth of the professor's affliction. The few times they've asked about the professor's end schemes, he simply answers them cryptically: "Trust me, I'll tell you when I can."

The students assisting the professor are **Lucvi Yasterna** (NG female human), **Royst Standish** (N male human), and **Vittoria Lucio** (LN female human). All are enrolled in Sincomakti's abstruse studies program, with Dr. Oscilar as their advisor. Royst and Vittoria are undergraduate students studying the Dark Tapestry, the Elder Mythos, the Dominion of the Black, and other under-researched subjects. Lucvi, on the other hand, is a graduate student and has studied the Dominion of the Black more closely.

Of all three students, Lucvi has become the most suspicious that the professor may be suffering from something more than simple mental fatigue. If the PCs present her with two or more pieces of evidence that the professor is suffering from an affliction, she confronts him and he tells her and the rest of the residents of Sombrefell Hall, including the PCs (see Confronting the Professor on page 42 for more information), the truth.

EXPLORING SOMBREFELL HALL

Sombrefell Hall is a large manor built in a gothic Ustalavic fashion that dates back several hundred years, when the professorial Oscilar family originally used it as a retreat from life in town. The researchers are occupied with their work in the salon (area **D12**), so the PCs are free to explore the house as long as they don't cause a disturbance.

NPC Statistics

Game statistics for the students and the professor are unlikely to be of much import in this adventure, as they are not combatants and cannot give much significant aid to the PCs when the Night Heralds attack. Mechanics for determining whether the students and professor survive the night are built into the events later in this chapter. Now and then, the PCs might ask the professor or students for aid in a skill check, in which case you should decide how proficient the NPC is at the needed skill. The professor has a +17 bonus on skills with which he is highly familiar and a +13 bonus on skills he is less familiar with, while the three students have a +13 bonus on skills they are highly familiar with and a +9 bonus on less familiar skills.

While exploring, the PCs might find evidence that the professor hasn't told them the true extent of his research here. (See Confronting the Professor on page 42 for more details.) Since no one lives here permanently, there is little in the way of treasure or combat items in the house.

Unless otherwise noted, during the day, the lighting in all areas of the house is dim. The PCs can take the floor sconces in area **D1** to serve as torches. Ceilings are 15 feet high with the exception of the receiving room (area **D1**).

D1. Receiving Room

This receiving hall is oppressively gloomy, though a n unlit chandelier glitters twenty feet overhead. Dusty red carpeting runs down its center, flanked with rows of six-foot-tall iron floor sconces with a few lit candles. At the end of the hall are staircases leading to a second-floor balcony.

The floor sconces in this receiving room only sparsely light the hall, though the PCs can light additional sconces to bring the lighting level up to bright. The curved staircases at the northern end of the room lead to area **D14**.

If the PCs look above them, they notice a massive unlit crystal chandelier hanging overhead. Any PC who succeeds at a DC 20 Perception check finds a hidden lever at the base of each staircase. These levers are control mechanisms to raise and lower the chandelier—a character can use an Interact action to operate either lever to raise or lower the chandelier by 10 feet. A character can also use an action to drop the chandelier onto the floor below. The chandelier deals 6d6 bludgeoning damage to any creature directly below it (a successful DC 20 Reflex save halves this damage, or negates it completely on a critical success). The chandelier counts as difficult terrain when on the floor.

D2. Library

This library's centerpiece is an enormous marble column set with towering bookshelves. Dusty divans and tables are arranged for groups to sit and study or read.

The leather-bound books on the center pillar concern scholarly subjects that seem of little interest to the professor's studies—histories of the Inner Sea region, tomes on ancient civilizations, language-translation aids, and the like. These tomes were once the pride of the Oscilar family's personal collection, though they have largely gone unused since Verid focused on a more esoteric subject.

Evidence: A cursory inspection of these books reveals that a few contain general information about the Dark Tapestry, but nothing beyond the basics. However, if a PC spends 20 minutes perusing the books and succeeds at a DC 20 Perception check, she notices a loose leaf of paper with handwriting tucked into one tome. The following is legible: "Transformation? Mental cage? Remote connection? Investigate how!"

This is the professor's own note that he recorded the first night he suffered a dissociative episode. If the PCs show this note to any of the students, they can confirm that it's the professor's handwriting. This is a piece of evidence the PCs can present to Lucvi or the professor to learn the truth.

D3. Kitchen

This kitchen contains large food preparation counters as well as counters along the walls with small fire pits and built-in ovens.

No food is stored here (stores are kept in area D5), though the cabinets contain roughly a dozen large, well-made silver cooking knives that can be used as expert-quality silver daggers.

D4. Dining Room

Floor-to-ceiling glass panes—a luxury that must have cost the Oscilars a fortune—make up this posh dining room's entire western wall. A solid mahogany dining table overlooks this magnificent vista, though a thick layer of dust covers it. Smaller serving trays and furniture are arranged neatly around the room in clusters.

This is Sombrefell Hall's main dining area. The western wall is a picture window overlooking the lake and surrounding scenery. A dining table is anchored to the floor in the room's western side, but the rest of the furniture is movable. Two dining carts on wheels can each be pushed against the main door with 1 action, and the small wooden chairs at the main dining table can each be placed against the door with an action.

The window gives the room bright light during the day.

D5. Pantry

This small pantry contains two large, ceiling-high shelves filled with preserves and cooking supplies.

If a PC Seeks through the shelves and succeeds at a DC 14 Perception check, they find seven cloves of garlic and four flasks of lamp oil.

D6–D7. Student Quarters

Once used as quarters for the Oscilar family's employees, these bedrooms now house Royst and Vittoria, two student researchers helping the professor. These rooms hold only a few changes of mundane clothes, small toiletry items, rumpled bedclothes, and class notes from Dr. Oscilar's previous lectures about the Dark Tapestry.

Verid Oscilar

D8. Recreation Hall

This small dining area and break room features a table and a few chairs.

Once set aside for the Oscilars' employees, this room now serves as a hallway between the students' and professor's quarters. The table here is nailed to the floor, but the smaller chairs can be used to barricade the doors to this room. It takes two chairs to barricade a smaller door, and four to barricade the larger main doors.

D9. Closet

This unremarkable storage room contains a few scattered, empty trunks that look to have been untouched for years.

A PC who succeeds at a DC 23 Perception check notices that there is no dust on the floor near the small rug in the northeastern corner, and that the rug is placed unevenly, indicating it's been moved recently. If the PCs move the rug aside, they find a trap door that leads to the basement (area **D19**). The trap door is locked, but it can be unlocked with three successful DC 25 Thievery checks (the professor keeps the key to this door on him at all times).

Evidence: The professor's research assistants know nothing about this door or the basement's existence, and they are genuinely baffled if the PCs ask them about it. However, the existence of the door is a piece of evidence the PCs can present to Lucvi or the professor to learn the truth.

D10. Professor's Room

This bedroom is tidy, with bed made and clothes folded on the dresser, as if it hasn't been used in some time.

The professor's few personal effects lie about the room. A PC can find his journal under the bed's pillow with a successful DC 20 Perception check. The journal mostly details his duties on campus and praises his smartest students, especially Lucvi. However, the last few pages have been ripped out. The last entry is a single paragraph dated 6 weeks prior: "Who is Ramlock? Why can I hear his voice? I must learn what afflicts me, and fast. The gods save my poor students if I fail."

Evidence: This entry is one piece of evidence the PCs can present to Lucvi or the professor to learn the truth.

D11. Lucvi's Quarters

These are the temporary quarters of Lucvi, the professor's graduate assistant. They're as sparse as the other students' quarters (areas **D6** and **D7**).

D12. Salon

Sombrefell Hall's salon may have once been a relaxing room for entertainment, but today the chamber has been converted into a fantastically messy study.

At all hours, save for a period of time from 1 a.m. to 8 a.m., the professor and students occupy this room, frantically reading, taking notes, and positing conclusions among themselves.

From 1 a.m. until 8 a.m., Royst and Vittoria sleep in areas **D6** and **D7**, while Lucvi falls asleep on one of the large divans. Once the students are asleep, the professor locks himself in the basement (area **D19**) to wait for the night's disassociative episode to pass.

If the PCs enter this room while the researchers are working, they're sharply asked to leave and return when the professor summons them. If they explore while only Lucvi sleeps here, they can quietly peruse the research without waking her with a successful DC 22 Stealth check to Sneak. A successful check and 30 minutes of reading reveals that the researchers are studying whether a dangerous ritual that they fear has been performed recently could bring emissaries of the Dominion of the Black to Golarion.

D13. Storage

This old storeroom is filled with trunks of old moth-eaten clothes, damaged paintings, broken sconces, and the like.

These boxes can be used to barricade doors, but apart from them, there is little of use in the room.

D14. Upper Hallway

This balcony has a banister to prevent accidental falls, and stairs at the eastern and western ends lead down.

A small doorway just off the western staircase has a new-looking padlock clamped onto it (requiring three successful DC 25 Thievery checks to unlock without the professor's key). This door leads to the attic (area **D18**).

D15—D17. Bedrooms

These rooms are the primary bedchambers at Sombrefell Hall. Area **D15** and **D17** are guest bedrooms, while **D16** is the master bedroom and contains a small, built-in closet and vanity on its east side. The northern side of each room sports large, Chelish-style iron-and-glass doors that open onto expansive balconies overlooking the lake. The drop to the ground is 10 feet, though the ivy growing on the balconies' trellises can be used to Climb down to the ground or up to the landings with a successful DC 12 Athletics check.

There is little of note in these rooms. The researchers aren't using them and don't even venture upstairs, which is why they've offered them to the PCs.

D18. Attic

> This is a cluttered storage area.

This area is padlocked, as indicated in area **D14**.

If a PC succeeds at a DC 26 Perception check to Seek, or a DC 16 Perception check after spending at least 20 minutes sifting through the junk, they make an alarming discovery. In the northeast corner beside one of the attic's windows is a decaying humanoid corpse. A PC who succeeds at a DC 12 Religion check can determine that this is not a normal body, but the remains of a zombie. A letter opener with the monogram "VO" is embedded in the zombie's head.

Two nights ago, the professor began to feel a nagging need to check the attic. When he did, he was accosted by a monstrosity that had crawled into the attic's window: an undead scout sent to look over the manor. The professor was just barely able to slay the zombie with a letter opener he carried in his pocket. After the terrifying incident, Dr. Oscilar padlocked the attic, told no one, and applied himself anew to finding answers as quickly as possible.

Evidence: The zombie's remains are evidence the PCs can present to Lucvi or the professor to learn the truth.

D19. Basement

Sombrefell Hall's hidden basement is in a state of ruin, for here is where the professor locks himself at night while the entity within him attempts to communicate with the Night Heralds. There is a single cot and connected chains in the southeast corner. This area is difficult terrain.

Bizarre, alien-looking chalk writing covers the walls. With a successful DC 23 Society check, a PC realizes that this is not any known language, but that it shares minor similarities with Aklo. Any PC who casts *detect alignment* recognizes that a faint aura of evil radiates from the graffiti.

Evidence: The PCs can confront the professor about the state of the hidden basement, but simply knowing its existence is enough to serve as a piece of evidence. See Confronting the Professor below for more.

Confronting the Professor

As they explore Sombrefell Hall, the PCs can find several pieces of evidence that the professor is hiding something dire. If they find at least three of the pieces of evidence in areas **D2**, **D9**, **D10**, **D18**, or **D19** and then confront the professor about them, he breaks down and reveals the truth (as he sees it). Alternatively, if they take two pieces of evidence to Lucvi, she becomes terrified for her mentor and confronts him. If the PCs confront him but don't have enough evidence, he waves off their concerns, but Lucvi approaches them and encourages them to find more evidence to support their suspicions (which she shares).

Once successfully confronted, the professor hangs his head in shame and admits that he has been experiencing periods of disassociation, as described in this adventure's background, and that he's been locking himself in Sombrefell's basement to limit the harm his altered persona might otherwise cause. Further, he has determined that a Night Heralds' ritual has caused his affliction, and he suspects a powerful cult leader is behind it. He suspects that if he learns exactly what sort of creature has initiated this control, he can end the affliction by neutralizing or destroying that villain. (In truth, the vampiric brain collector Ilvoresh controls the professor's affliction and soon plans to bring an army of undead to complete the ritual to turn him into a full-fledged agent of the Dominion, but the professor does not know this.)

Event 1. Out of Time — Low 7

Whether or not the PCs convince the professor to share the truth, Ilvoresh's undead creatures begin the assault on Sombrefell Hall 10 minutes after nightfall on the day the PCs arrive. At this point, a slow, rhythmic pounding on the manor's front door echoes through the house. If the PCs don't answer it, the professor opens the front door—inadvertently letting in a group of five ghasts.

The professor and students scramble out of the way and hide behind furniture in the library (area **D2**), leaving the PCs to fight the angry undead. The ghasts attempt to paralyze Dr. Oscilar but are under orders not to kill him, but no such orders exist to protect the students. If the PCs are present, the ghouls attack them first, recognizing them as dangerous adversaries. Each round that the PCs don't actively fight against the ghasts, there's a 25% chance Royst or Vittoria is slain by one of the undead.

5 GHASTS — CREATURE 3

Pathfinder Playtest Bestiary

Initiative Perception +8

Special: Once he's calmed himself, the professor emerges to regard the PCs and his students with grave looks. If he hasn't explained what's happening, he does

so now (see Confronting the Professor on page 42). Now that the undead have attacked, he's become convinced that a powerful necromancer tied to the Dominion of the Black is using its minions to accost the hall. He suspects that the necromancer needs him for some sort of ritual to fully convert him into a Dominion agent—and he's right. He is certain more undead are on their way.

Since night has fallen, the professor worries that he may soon fall under the Night Heralds' influence. Once the PCs have learned what's going on, read the following.

> With a sorrowful glance, the professor cries out, "My students—my friends! I'm so sorry for what's to come. I must retreat to Sombrefell's basement now so I can cause no harm. Please, adventurers, won't you keep my students safe until the morning comes? Use everything at your disposal to do this. Now, I must go!"

Unless he's restrained, the professor flees to the basement and locks himself within. At any point during the following events, if two or more PCs have the dying condition at the same time, undead creatures not currently engaged with the other PCs move toward the basement to retrieve the professor. It takes the undead a full round to break into the basement, no matter their number, and if a creature manages to begin dragging the professor out of the hall (requiring it to move at half Speed), Lucvi attempts to intervene for 2 rounds, after which the creatures slay her. If the professor is dragged from the hall, the PCs have failed their mission, and the waves of undead still attempt to kill the PCs to keep the attack secret. In this case, adjust the read-aloud text in **Event 5** as appropriate.

At this point, if Royst and Vittoria survive, they flee panicked to areas **D6** and **D7** and refuse to come out until after the assault. Lucvi, however, stays by the PCs' side. "I want to help keep us safe," she tells the PCs. Lucvi is a resource the PCs can use to help barricade the house or perform other duties before or during subsequent waves of undead, as described below. During actual combat, Lucvi hides from the horrors while the PCs fight them.

Event 2. The Assault Begins — Low 7

The ghast attack was meant to test the manor's defenses as much as it was an attempt to abduct the professor. The PCs have 10 minutes between the end of **Event 1** and the start of this event, although you should not reveal this. Lucvi suggests building defenses to help the PCs fight the hordes (see the Building Barricades sidebar). If the PCs make no preparations, Lucvi suggests lashing pieces of broken furniture in area **D13** to the front doors. This takes the PCs 10 minutes and doesn't create a full barricade, but the broken furniture is difficult terrain that deals 2d6 piercing damage to creatures that move through the entryway.

If the PCs have not barricaded the front doors, when this event begins, Sombrefell's front doors burst open under the force of the undead. If the front doors are barricaded, the undead spend 3 rounds battering them, as described in the Building Barricades sidebar. The PCs can use that time to secure their positions and prepare.

This assault consists of two vampire spawn and four ghasts. The ghasts charge the door. The vampire spawn attempt to assist, but if their entry is blocked, they use *spider climb* to search for entrances on the second floor. During this event, if the PCs haven't already, Lucvi suggests dropping the chandelier in the receiving room on the undead creatures. Each creature underneath the chandelier when this happens takes damage as described in area **D1**.

The vampire spawn typically can't enter a dwelling unless invited. If someone mentions this to the vampires, they eagerly reveal that during one of Oscilar's episodes, the vampires' master commanded the professor to announce they were always welcome in his home.

2 Vampire Spawn Rogues — Creature 4

Pathfinder Playtest Bestiary
Initiative Perception +9

4 Ghasts — Creature 3

Pathfinder Playtest Bestiary
Initiative Perception +8

Event 3. From All Sides — High 7

The PCs have 5 minutes to prepare for the next undead attack, although you should not reveal this. Furniture used to create barricades that undead creatures have subsequently destroyed cannot be use to build further barricades, although undamaged furniture can.

When this event begins, a crash echoes from the dining room (area **D4**). Two wights have burst through the dining room's picture window to attack. Two rounds later, another crash echoes from the salon (area

Building Barricades

Between some waves of enemies, the PCs and residents of the manor have time to prepare their defenses. They might use this time to build barricades out of the furniture from areas **D2**, **D4**, or **D12**. These barricades might go in front of the manor's main door, between areas **D1** and **D2**, or anywhere else they choose.

It takes 10 minutes to build a barricade in a single 5-foot square, or 5 minutes for two people working together. (Adding further characters makes the process less efficient and doesn't reduce the time further.) Characters must commit to building a barricade without knowing how much time they'll have. Consequently, they might be in an awkward position before a wave if they're still setting up a barricade, or they might be unable to finish it.

A barricade built against an entryway blocks that passage for 3 rounds of sustained assault by the undead hordes. Once destroyed, the barricade remains as difficult terrain.

D12), as two more wights have invaded that room. After they arrive, the wights in **D4** sense a presence and perform a short chant. Two rounds later, the dormant spirit of a dead manor resident stirs back to unlife as a poltergeist.

4 ELITE WIGHTS — CREATURE 4

Pathfinder Playtest Bestiary with elite adjustments (*Pathfinder Playtest Bestiary*)
Initiative Perception +10

1 POLTERGEIST — CREATURE 5

Pathfinder Playtest Bestiary
Initiative Perception +8 or Stealth +11

Event 4. Risen from Watery Graves — High 7

The PCs have 5 minutes to recover and shore up their defenses before the next wave of undead attack, although you should not share that information.

Vampire Spawn Rogue

When this event begins, six zombies emerge from Lantern Lake, clamber up the trellis to the second-floor balconies, and begin smashing into areas **D15–D17**. One round after the PCs notice the zombies, however, the true threat emerges: two greater shadows that come screaming over the second floor and down onto the PCs.

2 GREATER SHADOWS — CREATURE 7

Pathfinder Playtest Bestiary
Initiative Perception +12

6 ZOMBIE SHAMBLERS — CREATURE 0

Pathfinder Playtest Bestiary
Initiative Perception –1

Event 5. The Final Battle — Severe 7

The PCs have 10 minutes to shore up their defenses, though as before, you should not reveal this. Afterward, a grating voice echoes throughout the minds of everyone in Sombrefell Hall. This is the telepathic voice of the furious brain collector Ilvoresh. Read the following.

> "What a waste of undead flesh! All of my toys, broken, and all thanks to your friends, professor! Have you told them that you are the reason I am here? You have been chosen as Ramlock's receptacle. I don't know why you resist, but soon I shall have your mind, and Ramlock's dreams shall be my own, and you shall know the glory of eternity within my thoughts!"

After he has telepathically screamed at the PCs, Ilvoresh uses a *scroll of telekinetic haul* to pull any barricades from the entryway and then has his followers clear the doorway. He then clatters into area **D1** to attack. At his side are two vampire spawn. Ilvoresh is a horrific, scorpion-like creature with a cluster of blister-like growths on his back in which brains harvested from several necromancers slosh. But Ilvoresh is no mere brain collector—he has been corrupted by the undead brain in one of his blisters.

ILVORESH — CREATURE 9

Aberration Chaotic Evil Large

Brain collector (*Pathfinder Playtest Bestiary*)
Perception +15, darkvision
Languages Abyssal, Aklo, Common, Draconic, Necril, Protean, Undercommon; telepathy 100 feet
Skills +9; Acrobatics +16, Arcana +16, Athletics +18, Lore (all) +16, Occultism +18, Stealth +16
Str +6, **Dex** +3, **Con** +6, **Int** +4, **Wis** +4, **Cha** +3
Brain Blisters A brain collector has seven brain blisters on its back that it uses to store brains. A brain collector without a brain in each blister is enervated with a value equal to the number of empty blisters. It also reduces its bonus to all Lore skills by 1 per empty blister (to a minimum of +13).
Vampiric Brain One of Ilvoresh's brain blisters is necrotic and

warped because it contains a vampire's brain. This grants him the Necril language, energy drain with his bite and claws, and the ability to issue mental commands to undead of 7th level or lower as though they were his thralls.
Items *scroll of telekinetic haul*

AC 25, **TAC** 24; **Fort** +15, **Ref** +11, **Will** +13, +1 conditional vs. all spells
HP 105; **Immunities** confused; **Weaknesses** brain loss
Brain Loss If it takes 35 damage from a critical hit or takes 30 mental damage, the brain collector is stupefied for 1 round and might lose one of its brains. It must succeed at a DC 22 save (Fortitude for physical damage or Will for mental damage) or one of its brain blisters is destroyed.

Speed 25 feet, fly 30 feet
◆ **Melee** bite +19, **Damage** 2d12+9 piercing plus brain collector venom and energy drain
claw +19 (agile), **Damage** 2d8+9 slashing plus energy drain
Occult Spontaneous Spells DC 23, attack +19; **4th** (2 slots) *confusion*, *suggestion*; **3rd** (3 slots) *dispel magic*, *paralyze*, *vampiric touch*; **2nd** (4 slots) *invisibility*, *mirror image*, *paranoia*, *telekinetic maneuver*; **1st** (4 slots) *mindlink*, *ray of enfeeblement*, *true strike*, *unseen servant*; **Cantrips** *dancing lights*, *detect magic*, *mage hand*, *prestidigitation*
Brain Collector Venom (poison) Fortitude DC 23; **Maximum Duration** 6 rounds. **Stage 1** 1d6 poison damage and enfeebled 1 (1 round); **Stage 2** 1d6 poison damage, enfeebled 1, and slowed 1 (1 round); **Stage 3** 2d6 poison damage, enfeebled 2, and slowed 1 (1 round).
◆ **Collect Brain** (manipulate) The brain collector collects the brain of a creature that has been dead for up to 1 minute. It can then spend an Interact action to secure the brain in one of its brain blisters.
Energy Drain (divine, necromancy) When Ilvoresh succeeds with a claw Strike, the target must succeed at a DC 21 Fortitude save or become enervated 1. If the result is a critical failure, the enervated 1 condition can't be healed naturally—only with magic.

2 VAMPIRE SPAWN ROGUES CREATURE 4

Pathfinder Playtest Bestiary
Initiative Perception +9

Special: Once Ilvoresh and his vampire spawn are defeated, a hush falls over the hall. If he's still hiding, the professor scrambles up from the basement, astounded to find himself back to his true self—Ilvoresh's destruction has ended his affliction.

"That monster, he was the one! The creature who afflicted me with my connection to the Dominion! Now that he's gone, I feel the dark presence inside me no longer. I know now that they were dreams of a distant agent of the Dominion—someone or something named Ramlock. In any event, thank you, my friends. You have saved my students and my life. How can I ever repay you?"

CONCLUDING THE CHAPTER

With the undead and the looming Dominion threat gone, the professor is exhausted but happy to help the Esoteric Order of the Palatine Eye. Dr. Oscilar and his students leave Sombrefell Hall immediately to return to Rozenport, where the professor sets to work researching the *countdown clock* and the Night Heralds' plan. With his aid over the course of the next several months, the Esoteric Order can learn much about the Night Heralds, as revealed at the start of the next chapter.

Part of the playtest goal for "Affair at Sombrefell Hall" is to determine how well undead stand up to a group of healers, while another is to playtest the power and efficiency of a group's ability to heal up and endure a siege. Unlike "The Heroes of Undarin," which is specifically intended to test how long a group of PCs can endure an endless siege, this chapter's events are not intended to always end in the death of the player characters.

Nevertheless, there's a chance that the undead manage to capture the professor and return him to Ilvoresh to have his brain consumed. If this happens, the remaining encounters play out more or less as written—the Night Heralds want to leave no witnesses to the attack. If the PCs survive the night but lose the professor, the rest of the adventure can continue as written, but the players might have a newfound respect for or even fear of the Night Heralds and their agents!

Ilvoresh

THE MIRRORED MOON

Depending on the PCs' actions in the previous chapter, the Night Heralds' attempt to contact slumbering Ramlock and extract knowledge of the upcoming conjunction with Aucturn from his dreams may or may not have been successful. Regardless, the dedicated actions of the heroes in Sombrefell Hall have given the Esoteric Order of the Palatine Eye a game-changing clue. Whether the PCs learned it from reading Verid's notes or saved Verid and learned it from him directly, they now know the name of one of the Night Heralds' most important historical figures: Ramlock.

Time has moved on and the Esoteric Order devoted itself to researching what it could about Ramlock. Its members met with great difficulty in their studies, spending two years in the endeavor as well as copious resources tracking down elusive clues, disjointed records, and scrawled notes secured from libraries across the Inner Sea.

WHERE AND WHEN

"The Mirrored Moon" takes place in 4713 AR in a wilderness area called Thicketfell just southeast of the Stolen Lands, a region within the River Kingdoms. The events of the Kingmaker Adventure Path should be well underway, with that Adventure Path's characters deep in the process of exploring, taming, and claiming the Stolen Lands. Since "The Mirrored Moon" takes place in an area somewhat south of the Nomen Heights (detailed in *Pathfinder Adventure Path #33: The Varnhold Vanishing*), the events of that campaign shouldn't directly impact the PCs' search for Moonmere and Ramlock's Tower. If you've played through the Kingmaker Adventure Path, feel free to coordinate the events of that campaign with this chapter as you see fit—otherwise, you can assume that the heroes of that Adventure Path have progressed well into the events of *Pathfinder Adventure Path #35: War of the River Kings* and are far to the west of this area.

Unfortunately, Ramlock is an incredibly obscure historical figure, one who even at the height of his skill several thousand years ago was forced to operate in secret and whose work was suppressed and destroyed by those in power. It takes the Esoteric Order 2 years to thoroughly research Ramlock, but eventually it meets with success. Its members learn that before he relocated to Osirion, Ramlock was a mysterious Kellid wizard who lived in a remote fortress at the edge of his peoples' traditional territories. With the knowledge that Ramlock once lived in a tower in the easternmost River Kingdoms, the Esoteric Order turns to a talented group of rising members in their own ranks and sends them into the wilderness to learn more.

Ramlock chose this remote location as his new home for two reasons. First, it was distant enough from his people that he could engage in his research into the Dark Tapestry without interruption. Second, and more importantly, he was close to a place called the Moonmere—a supposedly magical pool located at the headwaters of a then-nameless river that, when it caught the light of the full moon, was said to reflect visions from other worlds. Ramlock hoped to harness this power to further his own studies exploring the source of his mind quake, and in fact, the many visions the Moonmere afforded him directly impacted his work on *The Last Theorem*.

The ruins of Ramlock's Tower still exist, and the Esoteric Order has narrowed down the location to Thicketfell—the western foothills of the Tors of Levenies, just south of the Nomen Heights. Whether the Moonmere, and thus Ramlock's Tower, can be found at the headwaters of the Little Sellen River or one of its tributaries, though, the Order does not know. The heroes must travel to the region to investigate, seek out the ruins, and then explore the site for any further clues as to what will take place at the countdown's conclusion, and determine if anything can be done to stop it.

Unfortunately for the PCs, the Night Heralds have pieced together the same information, and when they arrive at the ruined tower, they'll find a Night Herald cell already entrenched on site. The PCs must draw upon alliances and all the resources they can to defeat the cultists and learn how they might possibly stop the coming apocalypse.

GETTING STARTED

As the PCs in "The Mirrored Moon" are the same as those who played through *Doomsday Dawn*'s first chapter, they should already know each other and have established ties to the Esoteric Order of the Palatine Eye. Keleri Deverin remains the heroes' primary point of contact with the Order—she's gained power and prestige over the past several years, as have the PCs, although Keleri remains focused on more scholarly pursuits and leaves the PCs to handle the adventuring.

"The Mirrored Moon" begins as the PCs arrive at the western edge of Thicketfell, joining Keleri Deverin at an Esoteric Order encampment nestled on the northern bank of the Little Sellen River (see area **E**). The Esoteric Order has many endeavors going at this time, and while the Order has afforded Keleri

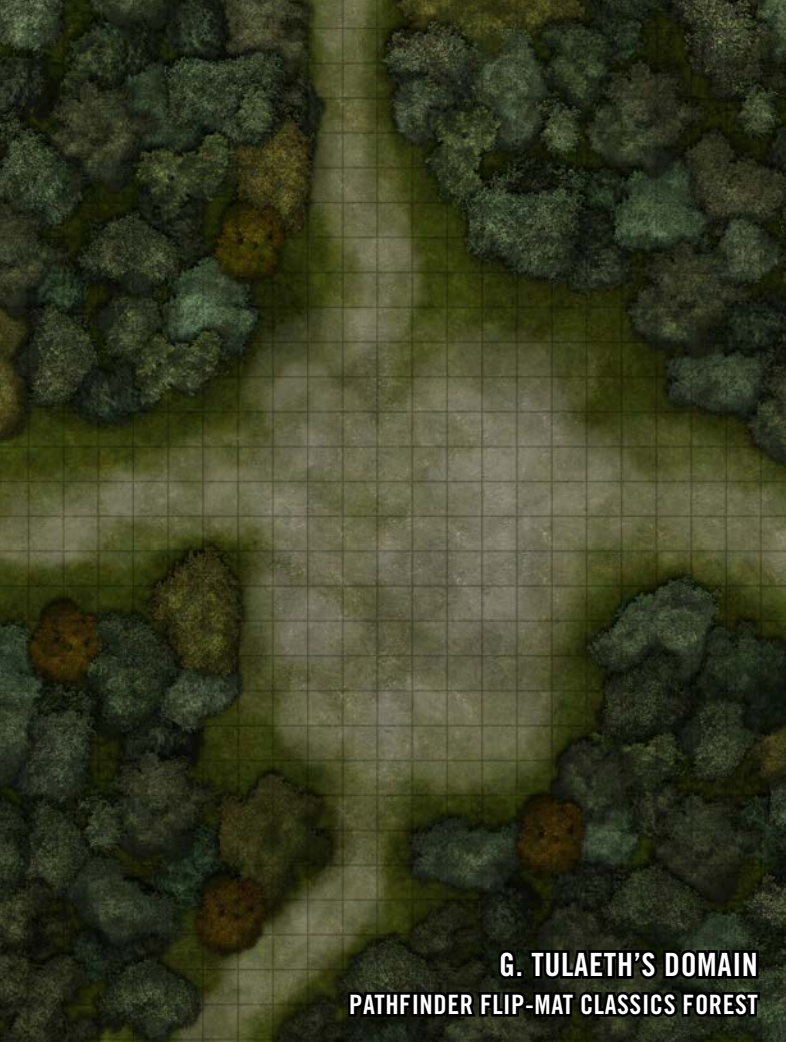
CREATING CHARACTERS

In this chapter, the players once again take on the roles of *Doomsday Dawn's* primary characters, advanced to 9th level. The adventure assumes that in the interlude between "The Last Star" and "The Mirrored Moon" that these PCs have been on numerous adventures while simultaneously gaining prestige as agents of the Esoteric Order of the Palatine Eye.

LEVELING UP

The players can make any choices they wish when leveling up from 1st level to 9th level.

PURCHASING GEAR

Each player retains the gear they earned and kept from "The Lost Star," but also gains the following: one 8th-level item, two 7th-level items, one 6th-level item, two 5th-level items, and 250 gp to spend on additional items. The PCS can pool their money to buy items.

the funds to hire a number of mercenaries to aid in the efforts against the Night Heralds, the amount of support beyond that provided by the PCs on this mission is small.

As a result, the PCs will need to spend time preparing and gathering resources in Thicketfell before they seek out and confront the Night Heralds—but as Keleri will explain, they shouldn't take too long! Once the players have reintroduced their characters to each other, inform them that they've traveled with Keleri to the edge of Thicketfell on the banks of the Little Sellen. As the PCs meet with their patron in her command tent on the river's edge, Keleri gives them the following information.

"We've come a long way since Magnimar, but we have so much more to do. We still don't fully know the extent of the Night Heralds' plans, although you and others have given us valuable intelligence to work with. We know that the Night Heralds seek countdown clocks, but not why. We know that these devices are counting down to the year 4718 AR, but not what event will occur then. We know the Dominion of the Black is involved and that a wizard named Ramlock is associated with them, but not what the Dominion wants, nor who Ramlock may actually be.

"Ramlock is our focus now, though. With the aid of Professor Verid Oscilar, we've learned a bit more about this mysterious figure. Ramlock was a Kellid wizard who became notorious in Osirion during that nation's First Age thousands of years ago for his research into the Dominion of the Black. By all accounts, he might be among the first on Golarion to begin investigating these alien entities, and perhaps even one of the founders of the Night Heralds. He vanished long ago, but according to our research, his original home was not in Osirion, but rather here in the outskirts of what was once Kellid land, near the site of something ancient texts refer to only as the "Moonmere." Unfortunately, the Night Heralds have learned this as well, and we believe they've sent a sizable force to this Moonmere. Something there must be of great importance to the cult.

"And if it's important to the Night Heralds, it's doubly so to us, for we are still very much in the dark as to their plans. We fear that the event they're anticipating in 4718 will be apocalyptic, and while that date is still years away, time is passing quickly. I doubt the forces we've been able to gather on this short notice will be enough to face the Night Heralds, but we have managed to narrow down Moonmere's location—we believe it lies at the headwaters of the Little Sellen River or one of its tributaries. And this is where you come in, my friends. While I remain here at this base camp, awaiting the arrival of more support and continuing to research the Moonmere, the Esoteric Order needs you to explore this region. Seek out resources to aid us, forge alliances with local peoples and creatures, and determine the lay of the land and the dangers within. But we must hurry, for in 2 months, a lunar eclipse important to the Night Heralds is set to occur, and if we haven't found the Moonmere and routed them from the region by then, who knows what horrors they might unleash upon the world?"

Keleri provides the group with a rough map similar to the one on the inside back cover. The only location marked is area **E**, where the Esoteric Order's camp is located. Include the hexes on any handout you give the players, since they'll need those while their characters explore the region.

Keleri is willing to answer what questions she can if the PCs ask, and if they don't ask many questions, she makes sure that they have enough of the following information to succeed at their task. Potential questions and answers are listed below. You can also use Keleri to clear up points of confusion that the players may still have from previous chapters in *Doomsday Dawn*.

PLAYTEST GOALS

In "The Mirrored Moon," we'll be playtesting how the game plays when the PCs have only one encounter per day. How do combats play out when the characters can expend all their resources and don't have to worry about conserving supplies or options? What about encounters where the PCs have the advantage of observing the enemy and preparing themselves ahead of time? These types of encounters are the focus of this chapter.

As a result, the encounters in this chapter skew toward the difficult side. We don't expect the player characters to face more than one of these encounters in a day, and in some cases, the setup of the encounter should give the PCs plenty of time to prepare before the fight. Of course, the skill of the players and the nature of the adventuring group can play an important role in how well they do in such a setup, so if the players find that one of the encounters in this chapter overpowers them, make a note of it but allow the characters to escape so they can continue in the playtest.

The final battle with the Night Heralds is an extreme version of this. It's built with the expectation that the PCs not only have time to prepare for the specifics of the encounter, but will have allies, intelligence, and resources gained from exploring the other encounters to bring in to aid them in this climactic fight.

What can you tell us about Thicketfell? "The region known as Thicketfell has long been unsettled wilderness—none of the River Kings have ever sought to rule here. A new kingdom is growing quickly to the north in the Stolen Lands, but even it has had little interest in expanding south into these desolate foothills and mountains. There's a forest nestled in the region's heart, but the Tors of Levenies to the east are the region's most significant landmark. With the region's dense undergrowth, it's probably best to focus travel along the riverbanks, but the rivers, with all their rapids, are not suited for boat travel."

What sort of resources should we be on the lookout for? "Any magical items you discover you should keep for your own use, but if you can find valuables, caches of treasure, or other natural resources, just let me know and I can send some of my mercenaries out to gather them. We can use these resources to fund the purchase of additional magical items to aid you in your final confrontation with the Night Heralds at the Moonmere."

Where's the best place in Thicketfell to look for allies? "We've heard stories of a remote, isolated gnome village to the north of the central woodland, and of a small encampment of cyclopes to the south of it. Not sure if they're friendly or not."

What sort of dangers await in Thicketfell? "The region is truly wilderness, so there's all sorts of dangerous monsters out there. We've already spotted what look like a few rocs flying to the north, and one of the mercenaries claims to have seen a dragon flying around the mountains to the southeast. There's stories that fey once lived in the woodlands, but more recent rumors indicate that most of them have moved on. Oh, and there's the tale of some sort of lake monster living in a lake in the middle of the woods."

What is the Moonmere? "According to legend, the Moonmere is a remote mountain pond that grants visions of other worlds when the light of the full moon is reflected in its surface. We believe the Night Heralds seek a way to use the Moonmere to allow actual travel between worlds, based in part on a fragment of old text in which Ramlock was said to have chosen the site for his home because it 'put him closer to the Dark Tapestry.'"

How can we discover the Moonmere's location? "All of our research indicates that the Moonmere was located at or near the source of a river in this region, but not which specific river. Some of Thicketfell's local inhabitants might know more, but following the various branches of the Little Sellen to their individual sources might be your best bet. Take care though, for our intelligence warns that the Night Heralds' force is significant, and it wouldn't do to simply charge into their encampment without at least scouting them out or building up resources first."

What is the significance of the upcoming lunar eclipse? "The Night Heralds attach significance to all major astronomical events, but particularly to planetary conjunctions and eclipses. It's during these events that their rituals are at their most powerful. According to Doctor Oscilar, who can still remember fragments of his time under the Dominion's influence, one such ritual has the power to call down a powerful alien creature known as a mu spore. We fear this is what the Night Heralds intend to use the eclipse and the Moonmere for—to call a mu spore to their side."

What is a mu spore? "A massive and immensely powerful fungal monstrosity capable of inflicting significant devastation. It's unlikely that the Night Heralds can control such a creature, but if they conjure one, they won't need to control it—the mu spore will likely destroy everything we could use against them at the Moonmere and then move on to wreak unimaginable devastation on the River Kingdoms, Brevoy, Galt, and beyond."

EXPLORING THICKETFELL

Once the PCs have finished speaking with Keleri, they should be ready to begin their exploration of Thicketfell. This region is represented by the map on the inside back cover. Thicketfell is located directly south of the Nomen Heights, the region featured in *Pathfinder Adventure Path #33: The Varnhold Vanishing*. Each hex on the map is 12 miles across: see page 316 of the *Pathfinder Playtest Rulebook* for rules on overland travel and exploration. The player characters are free to explore at their own pace. If they aren't scouting, they can pass through a hex at their normal overland speed.

When the PCs enter an unexplored hex, they can explore it. It normally takes 2 days to find out whether a hex has any places of interest (the letters on the map). Have the players describe what their characters are doing as the characters explore. A PC who is Searching can attempt either a DC 25 Perception check or DC 23 Survival check. If either of these checks is a success, the exploration of that hex takes 1 day instead of 2. If either of these checks is a critical success in a hex with an encounter area, the PCs receive a hint about what they might gain from the people or monsters in that hex (if anything). If either of these checks is a critical success in an empty hex, the PCs receive a clue about which direction leads closer to a hex with an encounter area.

Riverside travel is the easiest method of navigating the heart of Thicketfell. If the characters follow a riverbank, they can treat that region as normal terrain. The numerous rapids and small cataracts on all branches of the Little Sellen River make boat travel impossible for any appreciable distance.

As in the Kingmaker Adventure Path, the PCs gain points as they explore the wilderness in the Thicketfell. In this chapter, they gather treasure (represented by Treasure Points), recruit allies to draw off foes (measured in Ally Points), and collect research on their enemies (taking the form of Research Points). More information on all three scores appears below. You should track the points the PCs earn during this chapter in full view of the players

so they can see their progress. Let the players know that reaching a combined total of 4 Ally Points and Research Points is enough to get Keleri to offer support to face the Night Heralds (see area **E** for details). Of course, the PCs are free to try their luck in a fight against the Night Heralds before reaching this threshold, resulting in what may be an impossible encounter. They can instead push their luck and try to increase all three scores, potentially resulting in a much less dangerous encounter but running the risk of taking too much time, allowing the Night Heralds to conjure the mu spore—an event that will all but guarantee the final battle will be a loss for the PCs.

Treasure

Treasure is gained by recovering valuable resources from exploration and returning those resources to the Esoteric Order's base camp so that the PCs' allies can use the resources to purchase or create additional gear for use in the final encounter. Keleri has already made contact with several providers of magical gear in the nascent kingdom to the north, and as this chapter begins, she can share with the PCs the following information representing what items will be available and how many Treasure Points will be required to purchase the items.

Once the PCs decide to spend any amount of Treasure Points, Keleri can put in the order, and the item will be delivered to the Esoteric Order's encampment in 1d4 days. This time can be reduced to 1 day if the PCs pay 1 additional Treasure Point to expedite the order by paying for teleportation. If one of the PCs can cast *teleport* twice in a day, this time can be reduced to 1 day at no additional Treasure Point cost. Weapons and armor can be purchased multiple times (with the PCs deciding each time what sort of magic weapon or armor is being purchased), but the other items can be purchased only once during this chapter.

Treasure Points are gained when the PCs discover treasure specifically described as granting Treasure Points in the encounters throughout this chapter.

Additional Gear Purchases

Item	Treasure Point Cost
+3 armor	2
+3 weapon	2
Bracers of armor (6th)	2
Aeon stone (pink rhomboid)	2
Staff of fire (greater)	1
Staff of healing	1

Allies

Allies are gained by forging alliances with locals, whether they're small villages of creatures or single potent monsters. Allies help the PCs in the final battle against the Night Heralds by drawing away some of the forces encamped at Ramlock's Tower. This reduces the number of foes the PCs will be forced to face themselves. Let the PCs know that they'll gain more support whenever their Ally Points increase to an even-numbered value. As noted previously, the Esoteric Order's forces can usually drive away the stone giants and trolls in the final encounter, and the additional effect of Ally Points can be found in the encounter in area **M2** on page 56.

Research

Research Points are gained by assessing scouting reports about Ramlock's Tower, so that when the final battle takes place, the PCs can properly ambush the Night Heralds. Research Points are also gained by encountering people who have seen the tower, or by the PCs personally scouting the tower once they've found its location (area **M**). The PCs' Research Point total decreases as time goes by and the Night Heralds become more entrenched in their position at Ramlock's Tower. Once every 7 days, reduce the party's total Research Points earned by 1.

The exact effects of the PCs' Research Points can be found in the encounter in area **M2** on page 56.

Encounter Maps

When battles inevitably occur in "The Mirrored Moon," you have two choices. You can build battle maps of your own design on a blank grid, or you can use one of the Flip-Mats we've chosen to feature in this chapter. *Pathfinder Flip-Mat: Hill Country* and *Pathfinder Flip-Mat: Giant Lairs* are available at **paizo.com** or at your local hobby game retailer. We've also reprinted the maps featured in "The Mirrored Moon" on page 48 for you to copy onto a blank grid if you prefer. Additionally, if you prefer even more variety, feel free to substitute other Pathfinder Flip-Mats for encounters as you see fit; doing so can help with the verisimilitude of play in that different encounters won't seem to take place on similar battlefields.

As in "In Pale Mountain's Shadow," this format for supporting encounters with maps is something of an experiment and part of the playtest process. Make sure to let us know in your feedback for this chapter how this worked out at your table. Did you enjoy using Pathfinder Flip-Mats as part of your game, or do you prefer having custom-designed maps created specifically for encounters (such as the one used for the very last encounter in this chapter) to accompany every fight in the adventure?

E. Esoteric Order Base Camp

When the PCs arrive in Thicketfell, this is their first destination, on the north bank of the Little Sellen River. Their Esoteric Order patron, Keleri Deverin, remains at this location until the PCs feel they are ready to make their move against the Night Heralds.

If the PCs have a combined total of 4 or more Ally Points and Research Points, Keleri is confident enough in their plans to risk the Order's mercenaries on the cause. Once the PCs give the order, Keleri and the Esoteric Order mercenaries move upriver to area **M**. This takes

5 days—if the PCs cut things too close to the deadline, this might not be enough time to reach Ramlock's Tower before the mu spore is conjured.

F. Lake Aelona — Severe 9

Lake Aelona is a deep body of water (reaching a depth of 150 feet at its deepest point) fed by a tributary from the northeast. Due to the lake's size, twisting shoreline, and depth, scouting this hex requires a successful DC 26 Perception check and takes twice as long to complete.

While the shoreline around Lake Aelona is relatively safe, if the PCs attempt to cross the lake or explore its depths, they'll run afoul of the lake's most dangerous inhabitant—a serpentine lake monster. Use the statistics for a sea serpent to represent this creature, even though it dwells in a freshwater area.

You can use a blank Flip-Mat for a fight with the lake monster, since there's no need for terrain features in such a clash.

Tulaeth

1 Lake Monster — Creature 12

Sea serpent (*Pathfinder Playtest Bestiary*)
Initiative Perception +22 or Stealth +25

If the PCs defeat the monster, they'll be able to search the lake for resources in relative safety, and might come across a sunken barge filled with treasure. Searching the lake is an activity that takes 4 hours and requires a PC to succeed at a DC 18 Athletics check (to perform numerous deep dives into the lake's waters) and succeed at a DC 26 Perception check (to locate the sunken barge). A character who can breathe water can attempt the search in 2 hours without requiring the Athletics check.

If the barge is discovered, a cache of art objects and fine jewels in a watertight chest grants the PCs 2 Treasure Points.

G. Tulaeth's Domain — Severe 9

As the PCs begin to explore this hex of woodland, a PC who succeeds at a DC 18 Nature check notices that the vegetation in this region appears particularly healthy and vibrant. On a critical success, that PC realizes that the verdant nature of these woodlands suggests the presence of a powerful fey creature.

This corner of the woods is the domain of a particularly ancient dryad named Tulaeth. As with all dryads, Tulaeth rarely travels far from her domain and does not take lightly to intrusions into her realm. While she isn't a major threat to a group of 9th-level PCs, the grove of treants she's allied with could be quite dangerous if her anger is roused.

If the PCs attempt to move through this hex, Tulaeth confronts them and demands they leave the woodland entirely. She's dealt with adventurers before in her life and doesn't have a particularly high opinion of them, but she's not completely unreasonable. If the PCs can make a favorable impression on Tulaeth with a successful DC 26 Diplomacy check, she relents and allows them to explore and scout her domain—provided they harm no trees in doing so. If this Diplomacy check is a failure, she orders them to leave her domain, and on a critical failure, she demands the PCs leave the woodlands entirely. If a PC makes a good impression on Tulaeth, the PC can succeed at a DC 27 Diplomacy check to Request aid against the Night Heralds.

Alternatively, if the PCs ask Tulaeth if there's anything they can do to earn her trust, she ponders for a moment before telling them about the cyclopes who dwell at area **I** to the south, remarking that they often invade her woods to cut down trees or hunt. If the PCs can secure a promise from the cyclopes to leave her domain alone, she'll not only allow the PCs to explore and scout her domain, but she will pledge her aid against the Night Heralds when the time comes. This approach is more complex but does not require the PCs to succeed at Diplomacy checks.

If the PCs anger Tulaeth, refuse to leave when she asks, or attack her, she is immediately joined by the four treants who help guard her domain. Use the *Pathfinder Flip-Mat Forests Multi-Pack* map for this encounter.

Tulaeth — Creature 4

Dryad (*Pathfinder Playtest Bestiary*) with elite adjustments (*Pathfinder Playtest Bestiary*)
Initiative Perception +10

4 Treants — Creature 8

Pathfinder Playtest Bestiary
Initiative Perception +15

If the PCs secure Tulaeth's aid against the Night Heralds, grant them 2 Ally Points. If, on the other hand, they defeat Tulaeth and her treant guardians, the fine lumber and rare woods in this area net them 1 Treasure Point.

H. Korlabablin

Over a thousand years ago, a group of gnomes settled in a narrow cleft in the hills here. The gnomes built

themselves a lovely if eccentric village, living for a while in harmony with the wild animals, magical beasts, and fey who dwelled nearby. This came to an end when one of the gnomes, an overenthusiastic pyromaniac, started a forest fire that burned down nearly half the southern forest, resulting in the death of several dryads and countless wild animals. The fey of the region descended in a fury upon Korlabablin, but the gnomes, to their credit, were able to stave off their destruction through a combination of begging, diplomacy, humility, and tears. The fey allowed Korlabablin to continue to exist under one condition—that no gnome of Korlabablin would ever again use fire magic or enter the woods to the south.

Since that fateful day, the gnomes have dutifully obeyed these fey decrees, even though the fey presence in the region has diminished significantly—Tulaeth is the only remaining fey creature of note in Thicketfell, and her interest in the gnome village is minimal. The village has thrived, its buildings a fantastic display of colors and architectural styles. While the gnomes have dutifully avoided fire magic, their skill at mastering the other three elements has only grown, and the town has produced several talented spellcasters who've specialized in air, earth, and water magic.

Korlabablin is entirely self-sufficient, and the gnomes have little need of or interest in trade. Their habits of specifically avoiding taking the same routes out of town on hunting or gathering trips, in order to preclude the potential boredom of following in someone else's footsteps, have resulted in very few trails in the region and certainly no roads. The gnomes enjoy this isolation, but they also enjoy the opportunity to welcome visitors to their town, and thus they're welcoming enough to the PCs when they stumble upon the settlement. Lately, though, they've been having problems—a pair of rocs nesting in the tors to the east (area **J**) has been particularly violent, and over the past month a roc has swooped down to attack and thrash against one of the town's buildings no fewer than three times. If the PCs can stop the rocs from these making these unexplained attacks, the gnomes promise to help the PCs in any way they can.

If the PCs can solve the roc problem, the gnomes are delighted and greet the PCs with open arms and shrill cheers when they return. The gnomes invite the PCs to a feast that night to celebrate their success, during which each PC is invited to show off their specialties via DC 26 Acrobatics, Performance, or Lore checks. If at least half the PCs succeed at this check, the gnomes are absolutely delighted and shower the party with gifts. Individually, these gifts are not that expensive, but taken as a whole they provide the party with 1 Treasure Point.

In any event, by ending the threat posed by the rocs, the PCs earn the support of Korlabablin and earn 2 Ally Points. Furthermore, the gnomes can tell the PCs that Moonmere is somewhere to the south, though none of the gnomes have traveled to that region in recent memory because a red dragon dwells in the mountains there.

I. Cyclops Longhouse — High 9

An oversized longhouse with stone walls and a roof made of split lumber stands atop a rocky hill here. Curls of smoke waft up from a vent in the roof, while the approach to the longhouse is protected by tree trunks sharpened into wooden spikes and adorned with bones. In places, these wooden defenses and the roof appear to have been scorched by fire and then partially repaired. A PC who succeeds at a DC 23 Perception check can tell that the fire damage seems to have been not only from a very hot fire, but also directed downward from above. On a critical success, that PC realizes it's very likely that the longhouse was attacked in recent days by a red dragon or other flying creature capable of creating blasts of intense fire. The longhouse is scaled at about 150% the size one would expect for a building inhabited by humans, and for a good reason, since this structure is the home of a group of cyclopes.

These cyclopes hail from distant Iobaria, a land far beyond the Tors of Levenies. Banished several years ago for their heretical worship of Gozreh, typically a deity revered by humans, the cyclopes' religious leader received a vision and led them to settle atop this hill and build their longhouse. When their leader received a new vision that sent him into the tors to the east, the red dragon Liruthall took offense at the intrusion into his domain and slew the leader. Annoyed at the cyclops's audacity, Liruthall has continued taking out his anger on the surviving cyclopes. This has caused increasing turmoil among the cyclopes, with arguments over who should lead their group next and disagreements about whether continuing to worship Gozreh or remaining in Thicketfell is a good idea threatening to tear the group apart from within.

The cyclopes live in daily fear of another attack by the dragon, and they keep constant watch as a result. A pair of them stands guard near the entrance to their longhouse at all times while the remaining seven cyclopes huddle inside, arguing and bickering away the hours. If they spot the PCs approaching, the cyclops demand that the PCs turn back. The PCs can speak to the cyclopes for a time, but until the PCs convince the cyclopes that they mean no harm or can potentially help, the cyclopes respond to further approach by attacking. If a fight breaks out, all nine cyclopes join the battle, along with their pet smilodon.

If the PCs have promised the dryad Tulaeth that they would stop the cyclopes from hunting and logging in her woodlands, they've essentially got two options. They can kill all of the cyclopes and their pet sabre-toothed cat, or they can speak to the cyclopes and arrange a treaty. A PC must succeed at a DC 26 Diplomacy check to convince the cyclops to stand down and speak to the PCs. If asked about the fire damage or the reason for

their vigilance, the cyclopes see no reason to hide the fact that their leader Aaigrett was killed by a red dragon after entering the dragon's domain on a vision quest, and that the dragon has continued attacking them ever since. The cyclopes will be grateful if the PCs can kill the dragon, and promise to reward them for their service. They know the dragon's lair is in the mountains to the east, at the end of the north fork of the Little Sellen River (area **M**).

Use the *Pathfinder Flip-Mat: Giant Lairs* map when running this encounter.

9 ELITE CYCLOPES — CREATURE 6

Pathfinder Playtest Bestiary with elite adjustments (*Pathfinder Playtest Bestiary*)

Initiative Perception +14

1 SMILODON — CREATURE 5

Pathfinder Playtest Bestiary

Initiative Perception +10

Liruthall

If the PCs defeat the red dragon and return with proof of the deed, the cyclopes eagerly agree to a treaty with the dryad (if asked). In addition, they provide the PCs with a chest filled with jewelry and coins worth 1 Treasure Point. Finally, by saving the cyclopes from the dragon, the PCs earn 2 Ally Points if they ask for the cyclopes' aid against the Night Heralds.

If the PCs simply kill the cyclopes, they can fulfill any promises they made to the dryad and then loot the chest for 1 Treasure Point, but in such a case they earn no Ally Points.

J. Roc Nest — High 9

A mated pair of rocs has built a large nest here in the tors near the source of an unnamed tributary of the Little Sellen River. For many years, the rocs were relatively unaggressive, feeding on megafauna plucked from the vast plains to the east. Recently, though, this food source has run dry, and the rocs have been forced to fly west more often. The bright colors of the rooftops in Korlabablin excites, angers, and confuses the rocs, and until they're slain or until all the orange rooftops in that village are replaced, they'll continue to harass the poor gnomes.

Use the *Pathfinder Flip-Mat: Hill Country* map for this encounter.

2 ROCS — CREATURE 9

Pathfinder Playtest Bestiary

Initiative Perception +16

If the PCs can come to terms with the rocs, perhaps via wild empathy, *speak with animals*, or other magic, they can potentially recruit the creatures to their side. Doing so halts the attacks on the gnome village (in the short term, at least) and grants the PCs 1 Ally Point.

K. Slain Reinforcement

The group comes across the corpses of two horses and two cyclopes, picked apart by scavengers and their cargo scattered across the mountainside. These two were on an expedition to collect ritual components in the mountains but were set upon by the rocs (from area **J**) and slain.

Amid the cultists' possessions are letters revealing the details regarding the spell research that they've conducted. The group gains 1 Research Point. The PCs also find on their bodies a *lesser spell duelist's wand*, two *moderate healing potions*, and a *scroll of locate*. In one victim's hand is an uncorked but unused vial of *dust of disappearance*.

L. Liruthall's Lair — Severe 9

The red dragon Liruthall makes her home in a cavern in this location. She's not dwelled in the area long, having only recently arrived after leaving a larger nest to the north in the mountains along the eastern border of the nation of Brevoy. Still, she has moved into this cavern and started making it her own. Along the way, she attracted the services of a fire giant who has agreed to serve as her guard and sentinel. She's not sure why the cyclops cult leader Aaigrett showed up at her lair and confronted her, daring to challenge her for her territory only a month after the dragon's arrival, and was frustrated by the difficulty of the fight that followed. Since then, Liruthall's been taking her anger out on the cyclops cult, and she is eager to see how long she can draw out the group's destruction. The dragon isn't interested in treaties or talks, and she attacks intruders on sight.

Use *Pathfinder Flip-Mat: Hill Country* as the map for this encounter.

LIRUTHALL — CREATURE 10

Young red dragon (*Pathfinder Playtest Bestiary*)
Initiative Perception +19

FIRE GIANT — CREATURE 10

Pathfinder Playtest Bestiary
Initiative Perception +18

Rewards: If the PCs defeat Liruthall, the dragon's hoard grants them 6 Treasure Points. If the PCs free the fire giant instead of killing it, the giant agrees to help them. They PCs gain 1 Ally Point.

M. Ramlock's Tower

The Moonmere lies in a secluded valley near the source of the Little Sellen River. It was here that Ramlock chose to build his new home thousands of years ago, and the ruins of this tower remain here still. While the tower has long since crumbled, the underground chambers have survived, and a wealth of knowledge lies within. Unfortunately for the PCs and the Esoteric Order, that knowledge has been plundered by the Night Heralds, who arrived here many weeks before the Esoteric Order even reached Thicketfell. The information is still on site, but in order to secure it, the PCs must confront and defeat the Night Heralds who have encamped in the area.

The Night Heralds are a significant force, and while they've managed to sneak into the region unnoticed over time, their current encampment is sizable. Unless the PCs are being particularly loud or obvious in their approach, they should be able to notice the encampment before they are noticed. Any PC who wants to scout the camp attempts a DC 28 Perception check. If at least one of them succeeds, the group gains 2 Research Points, or 3 Research Points if anyone critically succeeded.

Use the Ramlock's Tower map on page 48 for area **M**.

M1. Giant Mercenaries — Severe 9

If the PCs brazenly attack the Night Heralds without appropriate preparation, they'll not only face the full force of the cultists below (encounter **M2**); they'll first need to contend with the local giants that the Night Heralds have hired to serve as mercenary defenders.

The PCs can draw off these giants by having the Esoteric Order mercenaries from area **E** join them in the fight—doing so allows the PCs to reach the Moonmere and the ruins of Ramlock's Tower to confront the core of the cult presence (the mummies, the cultists, and the brain collectors; see area **M2**). If the PCs foolishly attack the Night Heralds without the aid of the Esoteric Order, they'll first need to overcome a group consisting of two giants and five trolls.

1 FIRE GIANT — CREATURE 10

Pathfinder Playtest Bestiary
Initiative Perception +18

1 HILL GIANT — CREATURE 7

Pathfinder Playtest Bestiary
Initiative Perception +14

5 TROLLS — CREATURE 5

Pathfinder Playtest Bestiary
Initiative Perception +11

Special: Once this battle is over, allow the PCs to decide if they immediately want to press on to confront the Night Heralds or retreat. If they retreat, they'll need to fight an identical group of giants the next time they attack (or use the Esoteric Order's mercenaries to draw the giants off).

M2. Night Herald Cultists — Varies 9

The Night Heralds are led by an ancient member of the order—a mummy named Hidimbi who rose from death during Osirion's Second Age nearly 4,000 years ago but had remained trapped in her tomb until recently, when she was released by Necerion. In return for this, Hidimbi pledged her service to the Night Herald cultists until the *countdown clocks* ran down. While Necerion continues his search for *The Last Theorem*, he's entrusted Hidimbi with the task of leading a cell of cultists north to take advantage of the upcoming lunar eclipse to summon a mu spore from the Moonmere's portal. While Hidimbi waits for the fateful night, she's had her cultists work hard at scouring the ruins below Ramlock's Tower for additional resources. Some of these resources allowed the cultists to attract brain collector agents of the Dominion of the Black to aid their efforts.

Note that if the PCs simply attack the Night Heralds here without building up resources via treasure, allies, and research, this encounter will be an overwhelming one even for PCs who have time to prepare. If the PCs fought the giant mercenaries (see area **M1**) and press on to this

encounter immediately thereafter, the Night Heralds have had a number of rounds equal to the duration of the giant fight to prepare spells and defenses of their own.

Use the Ramlock's Tower map on page 48 for this encounter. The details of the encounter will vary depending on how many Ally Points and Research Points the PCs have; see the tables below for details.

ALLY ADJUSTMENTS

Ally Points	Area M Encounter Adjustment
0–1	The encounter runs as-is. The encounter is virtually impossible.
2–3	The group's allies draw off two of the cultists. It's an extreme encounter.
4+	Allies remove all mummy retainers and two cultists. This is a severe encounter.

RESEARCH ADJUSTMENTS

Research Points	Area M Encounter Adjustment
0–1	The Night Heralds are more prepared than the PCs. The defenders gain a +4 circumstance bonus to their initiative rolls. The cultists can cast all of their preparatory spells and the PCs lose 60 minutes of duration from any preparatory spells or items used before their final approach.
2–3	The PCs have a slight advantage, gaining a +2 circumstance bonus to their initiative rolls. They and the Night Heralds can use preparatory spells and items, but both sides lose 1 minute from the duration of any such effects.
4+	The PCs take the Night Heralds by surprise. The PCs gain a +4 circumstance bonus to their initiative rolls and can cast preparatory spells just before the fight. The cultists haven't cast any preparatory spells.

HIDIMBI — CREATURE 9

Mummy pharaoh (*Pathfinder Playtest Bestiary*)

Initiative Perception +15

2 MUMMY RETAINERS — CREATURE 6

Pathfinder Playtest Bestiary

Initiative Perception +13

4 NIGHT HERALD CULTISTS — CREATURE 8

Chaotic Evil Human Humanoid Medium

Perception +14, darkvision

Languages Aklo, Common

Skills +6; Acrobatics +14, Athletics +13, Deception +17, Diplomacy +17, Occultism +17

Str +2, **Dex** +3, **Con** +3, **Int** +0, **Wis** +2, **Cha** +4

Items expert chain mail, expert mace, *+1 crossbow* with 30 bolts

AC 25, **TAC** 22; **Fort** +13, **Ref** +13, **Will** +14

HP 110

Speed 25 feet

◆◆ **Melee** mace +16 (shove), **Damage** 1d6+2 bludgeoning

◆◆ **Ranged** *+1 crossbow* +17 (magical), **Damage** 2d8 piercing plus 2d6 poison

Occult Spontaneous Spells DC 22, attack modifier +17; **4th** (3 slots) *enervation, fly, resilient sphere, soothe*; **3rd** (4 slots) *blindness, haste, heroism, mind reading, soothe*; **2nd** (4 slots) *enlarge, invisibility, mirror image, see invisibility, soothe, spiritual weapon*; **1st** (4 slots) *bane, phantom pain, ray of enfeeblement, sanctuary, soothe*; **Cantrips** *daze, detect magic, forbidding ward, guidance*

Sorcerer Powers (6 Spell Points) DC 22, *aberrant whispers* (2 Spell Points), *tentacular limbs* (1 Spell Point)

◇ **Quickened Casting**

Frequency once per day

Trigger The cultist casts a spell at least 2 levels lower than the highest level of spell she can cast, or she casts a cantrip. The spell must require 2 or more spellcasting actions to cast.

Effect The cultist chooses 1 of the spell's spellcasting actions, and she doesn't need to take that action to finish casting the spell.

Steady Spellcasting The cultist's spells are disrupted by reactions only if the damage dealt is 17 or more, even if the reaction normally disrupts manipulate actions automatically.

1 BRAIN COLLECTOR — CREATURE 8

Pathfinder Playtest Bestiary

Initiative Perception +14

The old stories about the Moonmere's ability to grant visions of other worlds are true. On certain nights of the year when the pool reflects the light of the full moon, its surface clouds over and affords a glimpse onto the alien landscape of a distant planet elsewhere on the Material Plane. This is a one-way vision, but it's accurate enough for a wizard to study exhaustively and observe from afar. What the Night Heralds discovered about the Moonmere is an even darker, more obscure secret—that on nights when the full moon's light is shrouded in a lunar eclipse, the Moonmere's power is amplified so that rituals can be used to draw alien beings through the pool into this world. Exact details for how this ritual functions are beyond the scope of this adventure, for the PCs should do their best to defeat the Night Heralds before this event occurs (but see The Eclipse Comes, below).

The true treasure awaiting the PCs if they defeat the Night Heralds lies in the store of books, scrolls, tablets, and valuables the cultists have extracted from the now-empty dungeons below Ramlock's Tower. Filled with important esoteric lore and frightening glimpses into alien ideas, these objects will be invaluable to the Esoteric Order in preparing their next step against the Night Heralds—see Concluding the Chapter on page 57 for details and the ramifications of this find.

The Eclipse Comes

If the PCs wait too long to intervene, the Night

Heralds successfully conduct their ritual on the night of the lunar eclipse. As the moon turns an eerie blood red that night, the cultists conjure a mu spore to their side from a distant world that was long ago devastated by an infestation of these powerful alien creatures. The Night Heralds quickly vacate the region after their ritual is complete, leaving the mu spore to wreak havoc. Feel free, in this case, to have the PCs face this dangerous foe, although the chances are likely that the battle will go poorly for them!

1 MU SPORE **CREATURE 21**

Pathfinder Playtest Bestiary
Initiative Perception +38

CONCLUDING THE CHAPTER

With the cultists defeated, the immediate threat of the mu spore is gone. However, the Night Heralds and the countdown started ages ago by Ramlock still represent a doom ticking inevitably closer. By studying what the Night Heralds had excavated from Ramlock's Tower, the PCs (and thus the Esoteric Order) can learn much of what the Night Heralds themselves have learned about this countdown. Although it won't be until the next chapter that the heroes and the Esoteric Order can act upon this valuable intelligence, feel free to give the players the following information as a reward for their efforts against the Night Heralds. This information will help provide context to the things that they must do in future chapters of this adventure, and might allow the heroes to piece together threads from previous chapters of this adventure.

Summary of Findings from Ramlock's Tower

The notes and clues recovered from Ramlock's Tower are coded and complex, and deciphering them will take the Esoteric Order months to complete, if not years. Once finished, a dangerous and bleak potential future is revealed—one that the Esoteric Order must do everything possible to defeat! Listed below are the most important points of interest.

- The event the *countdown clocks* are ticking away toward and that will occur in mid 4718 AR is nothing less than the opening of a massive portal between Golarion and the distant planet of Aucturn—a place sacred to the Night Heralds. Details on the actual effects on Golarion from such a catastrophic portal remain unclear, other than that such an occurrence would indeed be a doomsday-level event.
- The scholar Necerion, whose notes were discovered in Magnimar years ago, has become a high-ranking leader among the Night Heralds, and he is spearheading efforts to gather *countdown clocks* in order to protect himself and other members of the cult from this doomsday.
- Ramlock was a wizard of great power who vanished from Golarion thousands of years ago, leaving behind much of his research on the Dominion of the Black. The notes recovered from his tower provide clues to a significant portion of this lore, but the greatest details were said to be held in the pages of his magnum opus—a lost text called *The Last Theorem*.
- Necerion is actively seeking *The Last Theorem*, and is following up on a rumor that it may have been looted from an Osirian tomb by a group of adventurers. The Night Heralds hope to secure the book not only to benefit from the lore in its pages, but to prevent their enemies from using something called the White Axiom to unlock the text's true potential and undo all the work Ramlock did in setting up the countdown in the first place.

Hidimbi

THE HEROES OF UNDARIN

When Ramlock was struck by his fateful mind quake, he suffered the last weeks of his humanity in a self-imposed prison-cavern below a set of standing stones sacred to followers of Desna. Drawing upon bits of alien lore, he scribed clues and hints on the walls of his cell—and just like a spell, once scribed, this lore left Ramlock's mind entirely. When he finally finished, he'd emptied out upon the walls of the cavern the last vestiges of his humanity. Fortunately for the world to come, the same energies that caused Ramlock to forget these key elements of lore left him blind to the notes scribbled on the walls, so when he left his prison and murdered the priests who had attempted to aid him during his convalescence, he had no idea he was leaving behind something that would not only some day become a linchpin to his own plans, but would also become hope for the future. The lore he left behind constituted secrets he would, later in his life, collectively refer to as the White Axiom.

WHERE AND WHEN

This adventure takes place in 4715 AR, a year after the events chronicled in the *Wrath of the Righteous Adventure Path* have taken place. The portal to the Abyss known as the Worldwound has been closed by mighty heroes, but the surrounding lands are still overrun with demons and monsters. The Fifth Crusade may be winding down, but the challenge facing the crusaders remains, even if it's shifted from one of holding the line against the demonic armies to cleanup. Enough demons remain in the region that it will likely be decades before the region is cleansed, and for now the place remains a nightmarish, post-apocalyptic realm.

For centuries, the standing stones were regarded as cursed, but in time the priesthood of Desna reclaimed the site, defeating the angry ghosts of murdered clergy who haunted the place and reconsecrating the stones. When these priests discovered the strange scribbling on the walls, they recognized the writings' magical power even though they did not understand what the words meant. The priests sealed the chamber and vowed never again to leave the site abandoned. In time, as the nation of Sarkoris rose in the surrounding region, a large church was built over the site, and still the faithful stood vigil over the chamber below. Over these years, numerous magical wards were placed to keep the White Axiom safe and hidden, so that if the caretakers were to lapse or be defeated, the secrets below would remain safe, although the priests themselves never fully comprehended the true significance of the equations and notes Ramlock had inscribed on the cavern walls so long ago.

So when Sarkoris, a primal land in the northern part of Avistan, fell to demonic predations as the Worldwound opened and the temple's caretakers were forced to abandon their charge, it was fortunate that the wards protecting the White Axiom were in place. Even during the region's time under demonic rule, the secrets below the church have remained safe.

Among the lore recovered from Ramlock's tower in the previous chapter is information about this White Axiom. Exhaustive research and vast expenses have resulted in a revelation: the White Axiom, the key to deciphering the true power of a potent Night Herald text called *The Last Theorem*, is hidden below a church in the ruined city of Undarin. Using contacts within the Mendevian Crusade, the Esoteric Order of the Palatine Eye have arranged for a group of stalwart escorts (the PCs) to accompany them to Undarin and stand guard while they venture into the basement of the temple and attempt to learn the secrets of the White Axiom. Its power will undoubtedly call the otherworldly forces nearby, which could turn this simple mission into a deadly final stand.

ALLOCATING MAGIC ITEMS

Once the players have created their characters and have purchased their mundane gear, give the players the following list of items to divide up among themselves as they see fit before play begins: *boots of elvenkind*, *cape of the mountebank*, 10 cold iron arrows or bolts (party's choice), *+1 cold iron dagger*, *explosive ammunition* (party chooses the variety), *greater goggles of night*, 3 *greater healing potions*, 2 *major healing potions*, *holy* rune that can be added to any weapon selected, *staff of evocation* (lesser), *potion of quickness*, 2 *invisibility potions*, *ring of climbing*, *lesser ring of fire resistance*, *slippers of spider climbing*, *wand of heal* (3rd level, 10 charges)

If there are 5 or 6 players, add the following items to those received by the group: *armbands of athleticism*, *bravo's brew*, *healer's gloves*, *greater healing potion*, and a *potion of flying*.

If there are 6 players, add the following items to those received by the group: *barkskin potion*, *+1 cold iron shortsword*, *eyes of the eagle*, *major healing potion*, and *oil of keen edges*.

Finally, each character receives three of the following, selecting a given option no more than once. The players may trade their items after selecting these items: *+3 suit of armor*, *+3 weapon* or *+3 handwraps of mighty fists*,

CREATING CHARACTERS

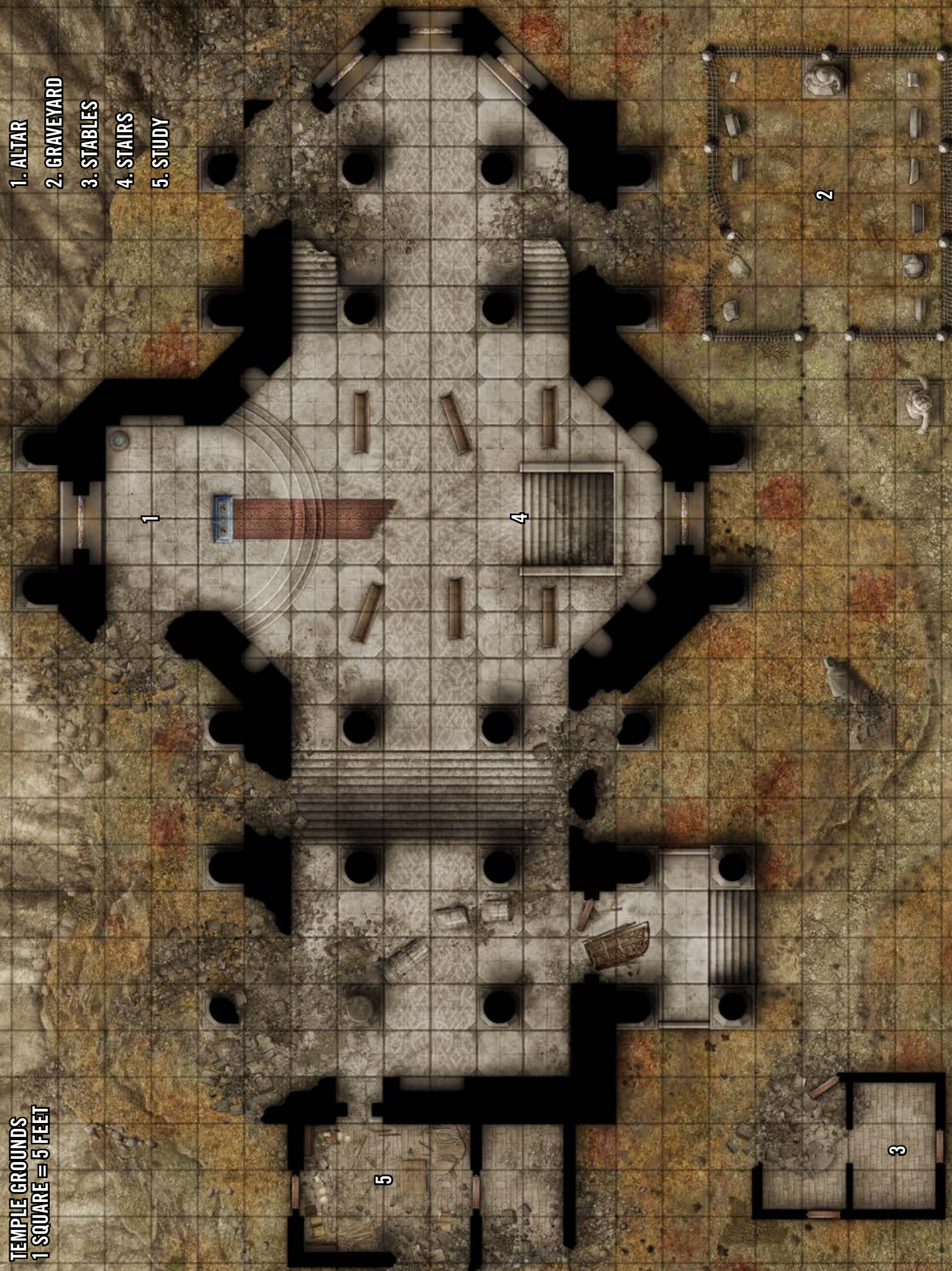
The players should build 12th-level characters using the rules found in the *Pathfinder Playtest Rulebook*. These characters should all be crusaders who have signed on to fight demons in the Worldwound. The group should work together to build a balanced and diverse party using any of the available character options. Note that the characters should avoid doubling up on any one ancestry or class if possible. Do NOT tell the players that their characters are about to face a deadly series of encounters that will test their character's endurance (as doing so can lead to unbalanced character choices). However, you should disclose to the players that their characters are hardy crusaders, accustomed to facing terrible foes in the Worldwound, and that the characters should be ready to lay down their lives to defeat their foes.

BACKGROUNDS

Character backgrounds should be chosen from those in the *Pathfinder Playtest Rulebook*.

STARTING WEALTH

Each character starts play with 100 gp. See Allocating Magic Items for available magic items for this part of the adventure.

TEMPLE GROUNDS
1 SQUARE = 5 FEET
1. ALTAR
2. GRAVEYARD
3. STABLES
4. STAIRS
5. STUDY
1
2
3
4
5

+2 weapon with one of the following runes: *corrosive*, *flaming*, *frost*, or *shock*, *bracers of armor* (6th), *light* or *heavy adamantine sturdy shield*, *ring of energy resistance* (one type).

GETTING STARTED

The location of the White Axiom has been uncovered via divinations and research performed over the last few years by the Esoteric Order. The mysterious lore lies in the ruined city of Undarin, deep within the region still known as the Worldwound. Although the gateway to the Abyss has been sealed, the lands remain infested with demons, making retrieval of the White Axiom a deadly task. A band of heroes has been called together from among the remnants of the crusade to protect the Esoteric Order's heroes attempting to collect the White Axiom's secrets. These crusaders will need to hold the line for as long as possible if this daring plan is to have any chance at success.

This chapter does not present a quest that the players can take their time at unraveling, nor is it intended to give opportunities to roleplay. This chapter presents the players with a siege, pure and simple. As such, it's best to begin this chapter by reading or paraphrasing the following to the players to set the scene.

> This week could not be worse.
>
> The journey through the deadly wastelands of the Worldwound has stretched on for five days now, escorting a group of heroes of the Esoteric Order of the Palatine Eye to the demon-infested town of Undarin. The watch commander said that this mission was of the utmost importance, but when talking to the heroes, it seems they are intent upon recovering some ancient writings called the White Axiom. Archaeology seems hardly worth risking lives over, no matter how rare the prize, but those were the orders and members of the Crusade are known for their bravery and honor.
>
> Although these lands are not nearly as dangerous as they once were, now that the Worldwound is closed, there are still roaming bands of demons, savage barbarians, and supernaturally diseased wildlife to contend with. The going has been terribly slow, and upon arriving at the destination, it has become clear that the ruins are far more deadly than the corrupted countryside. Demons lurk in the shadows, the dead stir from their endless slumber, and blasphemous chanting can be heard down every alley calling upon the foul powers that brought devastation to this land.
>
> The temple to Desna was not hard to find, located above a narrow valley on the city's outskirts. Upon arriving, the Esoteric Order heroes immediately descended into the catacombs to confirm that the writings they sought were here. Fortunately they were right; the ancient texts were down below. Unfortunately, they can't be moved, as the letters are carved into the walls of a long-forgotten cavern below the ruined church. It will take time for the heroes to learn what they can from the writings, and interacting with the powerful arcane formulas will undoubtedly attract the local inhabitants.
>
> Once the Esoteric Order heroes begin, the demons will notice and attack. But the demons need only to be held off long enough for the heroes of the Esoteric Order to complete their task...

The "Esoteric Order heroes" whom the PCs escort and protect in this chapter are none other than those the players created for "The Lost Star." These heroes remain "offscreen" for the duration of this chapter, and while the crusaders assigned to protect the Esoteric Order heroes are likely to die, it doesn't matter how long the crusaders manage to survive. Regardless of which wave of demons or undead finally exhausts the crusaders, it's just long enough for the primary heroes to learn all the secrets of the White Axiom and escape unharmed so they can fulfill their final roles as saviors of the world in "When the Stars Go Dark."

The events of this chapter occur over the course of a single day, starting late in the afternoon, shortly after the group arrives at the ruined temple. All of the encounters occur on the same map, with small breaks between most of them.

Playtest Goals

For a roleplaying game to convey drama and a sense of urgency, the players have to feel that their characters are in danger, that death is waiting for their characters if they push too far—a final consequence to a serious mistake. To properly calibrate Pathfinder to convey this, we need to push a group of characters to their limit and beyond. Therefore this adventure has only one purpose: to test the durability and endurance capabilities of mid- to high-level characters.

This chapter of the adventure will probably result in some or all of the characters dying, but you should give the players no indication of the challenge they are about to face other than what is indicated in the text, and you should resist pulling any punches when things become dire. While the PCs should be made with the assumption that this is an ordinary adventure with average challenges (as noted in the character building guidelines), these characters are destined to pay the ultimate price so that the White Axiom can be obtained. The PCs' task may be a suicide mission, but their sacrifice might just save the world.

It is worth noting that the magic items possessed by each character are intentionally limited to prevent gear choice from overly influencing the group's endurance. A group with a large stockpile of powerful healing supplies would fare much better than one that forgot to pick up such provisions. To prevent this, the total list of the PCs' equipment is provided, but the players can divide it among the characters in any way that they see fit.

LIGHTING

Unless otherwise noted, **Event 1**, **Event 2**, and **Event 3** have standard lighting. As the sun begins to set, the lighting becomes dim for **Event 4** and **Event 5**. The sun has fully set for **Events 6** through **10**, but there are faintly glowing sconces located throughout the temple. For these last events, the area inside is considered dim lighting, but the area outside is darkness.

"The Heroes of Undarin" concludes when all 10 events have been defeated or the PCs have been wiped out. You should be fully familiar with all of the terrain and rules regarding the locations on the map before running **Event 1** (see The Temple Grounds below for more information).

TEMPLE GROUNDS

The ancient temple to Desna stands on a hilltop not far from the ruined city of Undarin. What was once a place of quiet contemplation with a wonderful view of the stars is now little more than a ruined heap of stone. The walls of the temple are marred by fire and war, with large holes on every side of the structure and a roof that has all but collapsed.

The temple's interior is equally desecrated. Once-beautiful murals and carvings dedicated to Desna have been ruined by blood and blade. Although there are no signs of the bodies, it is clear that the central space was used for rampant slaughter not so long ago. The only part of the temple that holds any remnant of Desna's grace is the altar, and even its power is waning.

The characters have a few moments to explore the grounds before the Esoteric Order heroes begin their ritual downstairs. The following section describes the general rules for the area, as well as any detailed rules for specific areas on the map.

Altar

Cracked and worn from age, this stone altar still bears the faint symbol of Desna carved into its face. Of all the things here, this is the only place not marred by demon claw and the blood of countless sacrifices.

The altar to Desna is one of the few places in the ruined temple that still maintains any sacred connection to the goddess. Those standing within 10 feet of the altar feel calmness wash over them, as if her luck was with them. Once during this adventure, each player character can call upon Desna's blessing while standing in this area to reroll any one d20 roll after the roll is made, but before the effects are determined. Using this blessing is a reaction with the fortune trait. Inform the players of this option once one of their characters stands within 10 feet of the altar.

Ceiling

The ceiling is 50 feet high.

Cliff

The backside of the temple grounds has collapsed, creating a steep bluff. Characters can Climb this surface with a successful DC 21 Athletics skill check. A critical failure on this check causes the character to roll down the hill approximately 50 feet (and likely off the map), but the fall does not cause any damage.

Graveyard

The gravestones here are ancient, as no one has been buried here in several hundred years. The names on the headstones are nearly all eroded away, and most of the stones are broken, toppled, or missing. This area is desecrated, granting all undead in the graveyard a +1 conditional bonus on all checks and DCs. Living creatures take a –1 conditional penalty on checks and DCs while in the graveyard. Worse still, this place has become suffused with angry spirits furious over the desecration of this holy place (which leads them to later animate powerful undead and attack the living).

Rubble Piles

Parts of the temple have collapsed over the years, creating piles of rubble that are considered difficult terrain. In addition, if two creatures are separated by more than 10 feet of rubble, they are concealed from one another. This does not apply to creatures larger than Medium and to creatures that are not standing on the ground.

Sacred Ground

The interior of the temple is considered sacred ground, and while it no longer has the power to hedge out evil, it still provides a small boon to the living. Whenever a non-evil creature inside the temple is the target of a *heal* spell or another effect that restores Hit Points, the target regains additional Hit Points equal to the level of the spell or effect.

Stables

The interior of this stable is filled with rotting corpses, creating difficult terrain. In addition, a mass of biting and stinging flies swarms furiously about the building. A living creature that ends its turn within 5 feet of the structure is attacked by the flies and must succeed at a DC 24 Fortitude save or become sick 2.

Stained Glass

Most of the stained glass windows in this temple have been shattered over the years, usually by demons throwing a skull or helpless creature through them. The only exception is the glass on the east end, which shows Desna flying around the moon. No matter how many times it is destroyed, this window reforms each night at sunset. A PC who succeeds at a DC 21 Religion check can determine that the window is sacred to Desna and that illuminating it might grant some benefit. If a *light* spell is cast upon this glass, it bathes the entire temple in holy light for the remainder of the event (or until the end

of the first event, if used before the fight begins). While the light shines, any demons or undead within the temple halve their resistances. At the end of the event, the glass shatters and cannot be used again during this adventure.

Stairs

The stairs descend to a labyrinth of catacombs, prayer rooms, and cells for the priests, all of which are now empty and dark. This is where the Esoteric Order heroes have gone to learn the secrets of the White Axiom. The demons move toward the stairs, trying to go below and determine the source of the power that called them here. If the demons are able to do so, that particular event ends and the next one begins (see the Failing an Event sidebar on page 65).

Study

At the far end of the temple is a door that leads to a long-abandoned study. The room now lies in ruins with little of value to be found within, but a PC who succeeds at a DC 25 Perception check while searching the study uncovers a leaden lockbox buried in the rubble that contains a *blessed oil* and a *major healing potion*.

FIRST WAVE

Once the Esoteric Order heroes secure the area, they make their way down below to begin their research into the White Axiom, warning the PCs that their rituals will undoubtedly attract an increasing amount of demonic attention. It takes 10 minutes before the Esoteric Order heroes begin their ritual, during which you should let the PCs explore the ruins and scout things out.

Once the 10 minutes have passed, a hum begins to emanate from below, as if the very earth were vibrating. This should signify to the PCs that the ritual has begun, and as dark forms flit from shadow to shadow in the town below, it soon becomes obvious that the PCs are not the only ones who've noticed.

As this chapter progresses, the PCs will be faced with a total of three waves of assaults, each of which is comprised of three events. The characters will have little or no time to rest between these fights. While this might allow them to get the most out of spell duration, it won't give them much time to heal up and prepare for the next event. Within each wave, you should keep the characters acting in initiative order, even if the current fight is over. Only roll initiative again between waves, after the PCs are given a chance to rest up a bit.

Event 1. Slaver Demon Charge — High 12

The first event occurs just moments after the ritual begins. When the PCs feel the ritual start, determine where each PC is located in the church, then have them roll initiative. Combat begins immediately as a group of hulking horned brutes—slaver demons—teleport into the temple and attack anyone they see.

The slaver demons appear scattered around the temple

THINGS TO NOTE

There are a few things you should keep a careful accounting of during play. First, keep track of rounds and durations very carefully. The PCs are going to be terribly squeezed for resources during this adventure, and monitoring the passage of time is part of the challenge of running this chapter. In addition, the playtest survey for this adventure delves deeply into how long each fight lasted and if and when the characters met their end. Finally, make sure to keep note of the rounds between events in each wave. The players should know that the danger is not over, and they should treat this time with care to ensure they get the most out of these brief respites between attacks.

Unlike other parts of this adventure, the exact number of resources and foes the PCs encounter in this chapter will vary specifically according to how many players are in your group. This adventure gives specific guidelines on how to increase the challenge for your group if it contains more than four players. If it contains more than six, you can stack these rules for increasing the challenge for additional characters. For example, in Event 2, if the group contains seven players, they should face the same three treachery demons as a six-player group, plus a toad demon. If that group instead had eight players, they should face four treachery demons.

interior. Each one appears between 10 and 20 feet from a character, spread out between members of the group. The slaver demons are not prone to advanced tactics; they attempt to enslave the soul of the nearest enemy, cast *haste* on themselves, then charge in to attack, using their horns to disarm their foes whenever possible.

4 SLAVER DEMONS — CREATURE 10

Pathfinder Playtest Bestiary

Initiative Perception +18

5 Players

Add one slaver demon to the encounter.

6 Players

Add two slaver demons to the encounter.

Event 2. Treachery Demons — Severe 12

After the last slaver demon is defeated, the PCs have 2 rounds before the next threat appears. During that time, you should keep them in initiative order and limit them to their usual number of actions each round. After their brief respite, a pair of demons teleports into the temple to harass the characters with powerful spells.

One of them appears atop the rubble in the northwest corner, while the other appears in the eastern end (or as near to those locations as possible, if they are blocked).

The treachery demons have powerful spells to harry the characters, and use *reverse gravity* to make it difficult

for the PCs to reach them. Note that the ceiling in the church is 50 feet high, and anyone falling that distance (whether up or down) takes appropriate damage from the fall. If engaged in melee, the demons savage foes with their pincers, pulling them close and tearing them apart with claws. If reduced to less than half their Hit Points, they cast *mirror image* before continuing the fight.

2 TREACHERY DEMONS — CREATURE 13

Pathfinder Playtest Bestiary
Initiative Deception +28

TOAD DEMON — CREATURE 11

Pathfinder Playtest Bestiary
Initiative Perception +20

5 Players

Add one toad demon to the encounter. It appears on the path south of the temple, near the toppled statue, before moving in to attack. The toad demon casts *divine decree* before charging in, hoping to catch as many characters as possible in its Caustic Stench before using Poison Minds and attacking with its melee attacks.

6 Players

Add one treachery demon to the encounter. It appears on the path south of the temple.

Event 3. Ooze Assault — Low 12

The round after the treachery demon fight is over, a new group of demons approaches the temple, moving overland. The obvious group is a troop of blood demons to the south, but more dangerous is the slime demon approaching from the north. These demons spend their first action moving to the edge of the map.

A slime demon approaches from the north using Stealth, while its six blood demon allies approach brazenly from the south. The blood demons approach in two groups of three, roughly 40 feet apart from one another. The slime demon uses Stealth for initiative rolls (and it might not be noticed until it enters the temple if the PCs are too focused on the southern front), while the blood demons use Perception.

The blood demons have little chance of harming the characters unless they attack in groups, flanking and adding their sneak attack damage. Once the slime demon has been detected, the blood demons try to hide before striking at the PCs if possible.

The slime demon tries to enter the temple through one of the holes on the north side before casting *cloudkill* centered on itself (since it is immune to the poisonous effect). It also casts *stinking cloud* to assist the blood demons if the situation presents itself. Otherwise, this foul, noxious demon moves to attack the nearest creature, hoping to smother them in its body. It targets spellcasters in particular if they are vulnerable.

6 BLOOD DEMONS — CREATURE 7

Pathfinder Playtest Bestiary
Initiative Perception +14

SLIME DEMON — CREATURE 12

Pathfinder Playtest Bestiary
Initiative Stealth +21

5 Players

Add two blood demons to the encounter.

6 Players

Add four blood demons to the encounter.

SECOND WAVE

After the third event in the first wave, the area falls quiet. Strange sounds of muffled thunder and magical energy can be heard coming from down below as the ritual continues, but the demons seem to have given up the assault for the time being. Give the PCs 1 hour to rest and heal up before beginning the second wave. Read the following to the characters when they are ready to begin, then proceed with **Event 4**.

> The sun has begun to set over the ruins of Undarin. The demons seem to have given up their assault for the time being, but as the ritual below begins to intensify, a heavy fog seems to well up from the city below, ringing the hill and obscuring the crumbling buildings below. With the last rays of light reaching over the horizon, there is a rumble from outside the shrine. The earth beneath the graveyard seems to be churning, tossing the ancient headstones about.

Event 4. Wraith Explosion — Low 12

Drawn by the power of the ritual, a number of powerful undead have risen from their ancient slumber beneath the temple. The first group is a swarm of powerful wraiths rising up from the graveyard, passing through the earth as if it were air.

The dread wraiths are desperate for life energy and swarm to attack the nearest living creature, focusing on one foe at a time. They move on only once their target has been slain. Any characters slain during this fight return as wraiths, although these nascent undead pose little threat to the rest of the party (as they do not rise as dread wraiths).

4 DREAD WRAITHS — CREATURE 9

Pathfinder Playtest Bestiary
Initiative Perception +15

5 Players

Add one dread wraith to the encounter.

6 Players

Add two dread wraiths to the encounter.

Event 5. Risen Priests — High 12

After the wraiths are defeated, the PCs have 3 rounds to recover. During this time, the earth in the graveyard continues to churn and shudder. At the end of the third round, the graveyard explodes, sending clumps of dirt, stone, and shattered headstones in every direction. Characters within 30 feet of the graveyard take 12d6 bludgeoning damage, but can attempt a DC 28 Reflex save to take only half damage (no damage on a critical success, double damage on a critical failure). Creatures within the graveyard when it explodes treat their saving throw as one degree of success worse.

After the explosion, an undead guardian rises from the graveyard as a lich, flanked by two ghostly acolytes. The lich has spent the past 3 rounds in its tomb casting *mirror image*, *fire shield*, and *fly* on itself, in that order. On its first turn, it moves up in the air to avoid being attacked.

The undead in this encounter use their mobility to their advantage, and fly around the battlefield to stay out of reach, while also remaining far enough from each other to ensure that they can't easily be caught within the area of a single spell.

The lich casts *cloudkill*, *cone of cold*, and *fireball* whenever it can catch more than one character in the effect. The undead is a cunning foe, and makes ample use of his Counterspell ability to shut down spellcasters given the opportunity. Once magic-using foes are identified, he targets them with *dominate* as quickly as possible, hoping to gain fellow spellcasting allies. The lich avoids landing on the ground if at all possible, preferring to land atop the ruined temple if necessary to avoid melee combat.

The ghost mages have cast *resist energy* against cold and fire before emerging. They start combat by using their Frightful Moan, but then cast *cone of cold* as soon as they can catch more than one character in the blast. If this is not possible, they cast spells like *phantasmal killer* and *ray of enfeeblement* to target individuals. They resort to their ghostly touch attacks only if left with no other choice.

2 GHOST MAGES — CREATURE 10

Pathfinder Playtest Bestiary
Initiative Perception +17

LICH — CREATURE 12

Pathfinder Playtest Bestiary
Initiative Perception +20

5 Players

Add one ghost mage to the encounter.

6 Players

Add two ghost mages to the encounter.

FAILING AN EVENT

It is likely that the characters may fail one or more event, allowing the demons or undead to gain access to the chambers below while some of the characters still live. Assuming the PCs are not all killed and can recover, the next event can proceed as normal, with the assumption that the heroes down below managed to destroy the fiends before the ritual could be disrupted. Note that the characters failed this event for reporting purposes. If they fail a second event, proceed with the conclusion of the chapter, modifying the language to match the circumstances.

Lich

Event 6. High Priest — Severe 12

After **Event 5** ends, the sun fully sets, shrouding the hilltop and the temple in darkness. The temple interior remains in dim light thanks to barely functioning magical torches scattered around the building. Give the characters 2 rounds to move and cast spells before starting this event.

As this event begins, the dead begin to pour out of the smoking crater that was once the church graveyard. Each round, 1d4+1 corpses rise and move to attack the living. These undead look like zombies and skeletons, but treat them as mummy retainers. No more than 12 corpses rise in this way.

In addition, a demilich rises from the graveyard. Surrounded by a storm of bones and bits of headstone, the demilich hovers 10 feet above the graveyard, using its terrifying abilities on the players.

The risen corpses shamble toward the living and attack as best they can (though they are not very effective, their despair aura causes all living creatures near them to be frightened 1). The demilich attacks with its most powerful abilities, casting *maze* and *polar ray* on anyone who approaches it, cursing those who are far away, and saving *wail of the banshee* until desperate or a group of characters are near. Its *contingency* effect casts *dimension door* on the demilich the first time it is targeted by a spell, which likely causes the spell to fail as the lich teleports out of range of most spells. The demilich tries to devour the soul of anyone who looks particularly hurt.

Mutilation Demon

BANSHEE — CREATURE 13

Pathfinder Playtest Bestiary

Initiative Perception +22

DEMILICH — CREATURE 15

Pathfinder Playtest Bestiary

Initiative Perception +24

RISEN CORPSES — CREATURE 6

Mummy retainers (*Pathfinder Playtest Bestiary*)

Initiative Perception +13

5 Players

Add one banshee to the encounter.

6 Players

Add two banshees to the encounter.

THIRD WAVE

By the end of the second wave, night has fallen on the ruined city of Undarin. The ritual below the wrecked church continues with a sense of urgency that grows with the rising chants and thrum reverberating through the ground. The PCs have just 10 minutes to rest and heal up from the end of the second wave before the third and final wave begins. Read the following to the characters when these 10 minutes have expired, then proceed with **Event 7**.

> Darkness has settled and fires from the city cast a hellish haze over the crescent moon rising up into the night sky. The chanting coming from down below has been steadily increasing in intensity for the past hour, and now the earth seems to echo its rhythm. With each rising call, you can hear a howl emanating from the ruins. Powerful fiends have heard the chant, and are on their way.

Event 7. Deadly Greed — Extreme 12

This encounter begins just as a blood-red cloud of smoke passes over the moon, draping the hilltop in crimson light. A moment later, two boar demons appear via *teleport* and attack. These demons appear on the south side of the temple—one near the doors and the other near the churned remains of the graveyard.

The boar demons use their Light of Avarice power as soon as possible, targeting handheld items first (usually weapons), followed by obvious worn items (armor, boots, cloaks, etc.). They do not bother attempting to steal the items unless the PCs flee. If faced with a single target, they gleefully enter melee, although they use their reach to ensure advantage (especially if they can attack from the sky).

2 BOAR DEMONS — **CREATURE 14**

Pathfinder Playtest Bestiary

Initiative Perception +24

WRATH DEMONS — **CREATURE 9**

Pathfinder Playtest Bestiary

Initiative Perception +16

5 Players

Add three wrath demons to the encounter. The wrath demons approach from the north, flying in at the start of their turn. They use their Screech and Spore Cloud abilities liberally at the start of the fight, but otherwise they attack with their wide array of melee strikes. They use their Dance of Ruin only if the PCs avoid them.

6 Players

Add six wrath demons to the encounter. The wrath demons approach and attack as described for 5 players.

Event 8. Caustic Assault — Severe 12

After the last boar demon has been defeated, the PCs have 4 rounds to rest and recover before the next group of enemies appears. A group of toad demons assaults the temple next, coming from every direction. These 4 toad demons use *dimension door* to appear at the edges of the map, one on each side. They do not bother to cover their advance.

The toad demons open up combat by unleashing *divine decree* (evil), then setting up *swamp of sloth* and Poison Minds as is useful before charging in for melee. They try to remain spread out, attacking everyone if possible.

4 TOAD DEMONS — **CREATURE 11**

Pathfinder Playtest Bestiary

Initiative Perception +20

5 Players

Add one toad demon to the encounter. It approaches from the south.

6 Players

Add two toad demons to the encounter. They approach from the south.

Event 9. Demonic Doom — Extreme 12

On the ninth round after the previous event began, the moon is blotted out from the sky and a great darkness descends on the area, though the lights of the temple keep the building in dim light. At this point, one of the most powerful demons in the area finally arrives, intent upon learning the secrets of the ritual.

This monstrosity is a mutilation demon, and the constant battle has finally attracted its attention. The demon casts *invisibility* on itself before it uses *dimension door* to appear in the center of the temple, near the characters. It uses Stealth for initiative (and should act on a different initiative than any other demons remaining from the previous fight).

The mutilation demon begins the fight by casting *divine decree*, followed with a focused gaze on the nearest character. It revels in attacking paralyzed foes, using its impressive reach to tear them apart from a distance.

MUTILATION DEMON — **CREATURE 16**

Pathfinder Playtest Bestiary

Initiative Stealth +25

CONCLUDING THE CHAPTER

In all likelihood, the PCs will not survive the relentless combat of this chapter. If they all perished, read or paraphrase the following to them as the last character falls.

> With your last breath, you see the monsters approach the stairs, cackling in triumph. As the light begins to fade from your eyes, a brilliant light pierces the world one last time as the explorers emerge from the catacombs down below, unleashing holy radiance against the fiends. Their fight rages on, but your sacrifice gave the Esoteric Order the time needed to complete their mission. As the darkness claims your sight, you can only hope that this White Axiom was worth the price.

If, somehow, the characters managed to survive the assault, defeating all 10 events, they are truly legendary heroes. Read or paraphrase the following to them.

> With a hideous howl, the last demon fades away, leaving behind a puddle of terrible ichor. The calm stretches on around you. Could this possibly be the end?
>
> It is then that you realize the hum from the ground has stopped. The chanting has gone silent. The explorers have emerged from below, a look of awe on their faces. Looking across the battlefield, at the piles of dead fiends, they shake their head in wonder.
>
> "We have the White Axiom!" their leader calls out. "The Order is deeply in your debt."
>
> That might be true, but to a crusader, this was all part of the job—a job that is not yet over. You gather up your things for the long journey home.

In either case, the Esoteric Order recovers the White Axiom and escapes the Worldwound. Now it is up to another group of heroes to retrieve the original copy of *The Last Theorem* in "Red Flags."

RED FLAGS

While living in his remote home on the shores of the *Moonmere*, Ramlock committed all he could understand of the alien lore imparted to him by his mind quake into his magnum opus, *The Last Theorem*. Frustrated that he couldn't unlock this lore's full potential, at least not without the theoretical White Axiom that he had pondered, he took this only copy of *The Last Theorem* with him on his journey south to the blistering deserts of Osirion. Ramlock abandoned the book, however, when he came to believe that it was the shreds of his own humanity and his pitifully shackled human mind, not some missing axiom, that prevented his full understanding of Dominion science and magic. Ultimately he traded the book for aid in constructing his demiplane, after which *The Last Theorem* passed hands several times before ending up among the treasures buried in a pyramid called Ahn'Selota—a site known also as the Pact Stone Pyramid.

WHERE AND WHEN

"Red Flags" takes place in 4717 AR, well after the events of the Skull & Shackles Adventure Path. In that campaign, the previous ruler of the region, Kerdak Bonefist, was likely slain, with a new character taking his place as the leader of the Shackles. *Doomsday Dawn* assumes that new ruler is Hurricane Queen Tessa Fairwind, but if you've played through Skull & Shackles with your group, you should substitute whatever character ended up as ruler of the Shackles for that role in this chapter.

For thousands of years, *The Last Theorem* remained forgotten, until the Pact Stone Pyramid was rediscovered and looted by adventurers. Yet the book swiftly vanished into the black markets, and both the Night Heralds and the Esoteric Order of the Palatine Eye have struggled to locate the tome for years, to no avail. That is, not until recently, when a spy for the Esoteric Order intercepted a mysterious message intended for the Night Heralds that suggests the current owner of *The Last Theorem* is one of the Free Captains of the pirate-infested Shackles.

DETERMINE NECERION'S NEMESIS

A unique element of "Red Flags" is the assumption that one of the PCs has made a particular impression on Necerion, the Night Herald cultist who's been a significant figure during the events of *Doomsday Dawn* and whom the PCs finally encounter in this chapter. While all of the PCs should know who Necerion is and can recognize him on sight, one of the PCs in particular is well known to Necerion. The GM and players together should choose which of the characters is Necerion's nemesis. Necerion knows this PC's class, all of this PC's spells of level 5 or lower, and all magic items this PC carries that are 12th-level or lower; likewise, this PC knows some details about Necerion (see About Necerion on page 72). Details on how Necerion can use his knowledge of this PC is provided as appropriate in the text of this chapter.

If you prefer, two characters can both be Necerion's nemeses. In this case, Necerion knows the above information about both of these PCs, and each PC gains some of the information provided in About Necerion from this previous relationship—though each PC might know different things!

GETTING STARTED

When the primary heroes managed to extract the lore of the White Axiom from the cavern walls during "The Heroes of Undarin," they gained control of a crucial element needed to oppose the Night Heralds. Yet without a copy of *The Last Theorem*, the power held by the White Axiom is nothing more than untapped potential. In addition, the overwhelming presence of the White Axiom's truths take some time for mortal minds to absorb and comprehend, and so the primary heroes must retreat to a safe haven held by the Esoteric Order deep in Ustalav to contemplate and recover from their ordeal—a process that will take a few years and that keeps them in hiding during the events of "Red Flags."

In the meantime, though, the Esoteric Order does not stay idle. Like the Night Heralds, they've been following up on rumors that a group of adventurers found and looted *The Last Theorem*, only to go into hiding soon thereafter. As this adventure begins, Keleri Deverin has come into possession of a letter that urges immediate action. According to the letter, the only existing copy of *The Last Theorem* is held in the treasury of a pirate Free Captain named Whark the Alabaster, the lord of Plumetown, which is located on an island in the Shackles called the Smoker.

Jumping on the opportunity, the Esoteric Order has decided to send several of their highest-ranking members south to infiltrate a gala being held by Whark and recover *The Last Theorem*. But what the Esoteric Order does not know is that the note was meant to be intercepted! A nearly identical note was sent to Necerion, and the notorious Night Herald has a head start.

CREATING CHARACTERS

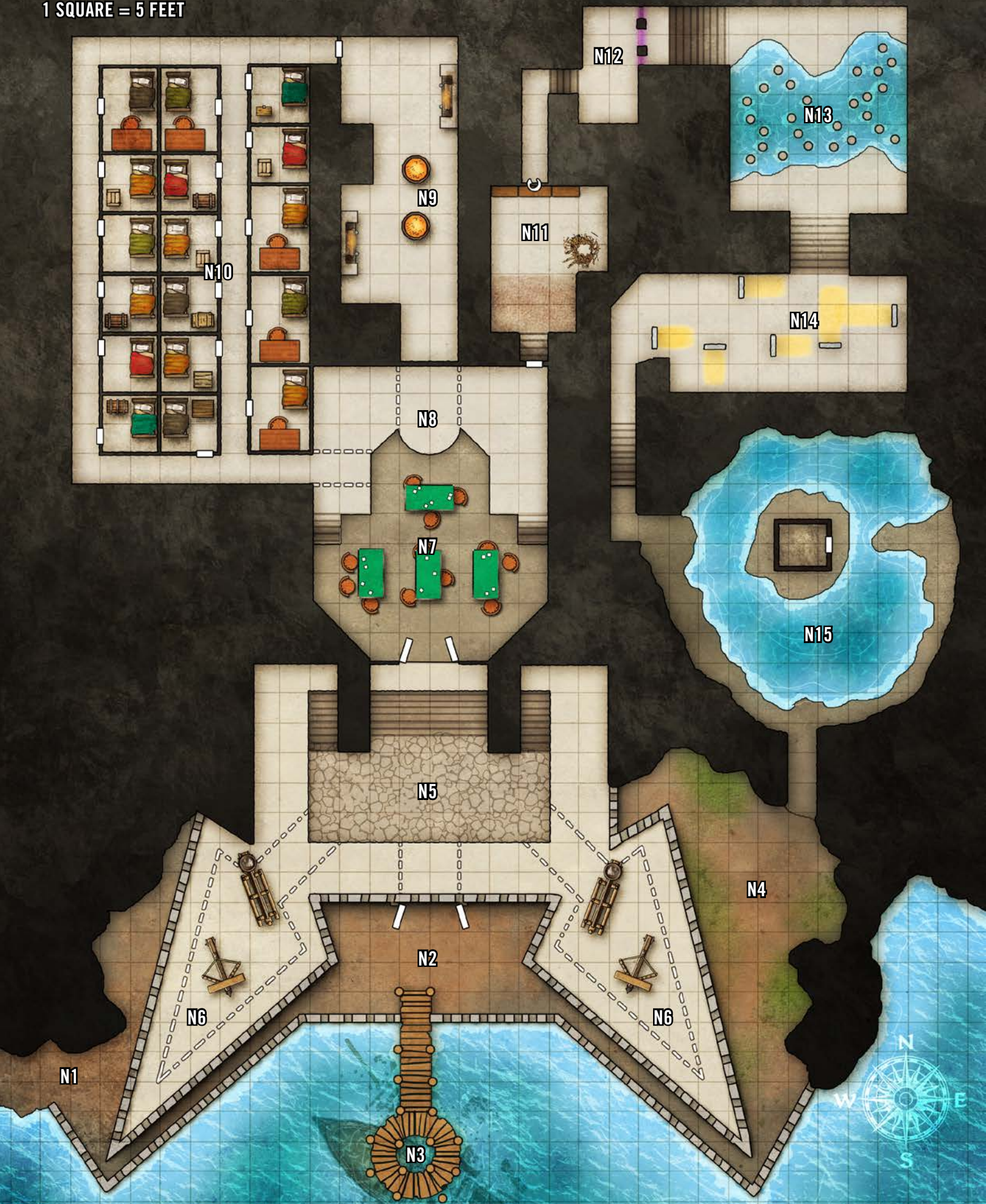
In this adventure, the player characters take the role of high-ranking members of the Esoteric Order of the Palatine Eye. The players should create a group of 14th-level characters with skill sets that favor infiltration, knowledge, and subtlety rather than aggressive combat prowess.

BACKGROUNDS

Each player should choose a background for their character from those listed on pages 38–39 of the *Pathfinder Playtest Rulebook*. Each player should also determine what their character's role in the Esoteric Order of the Palatine Eye is: archivist, diplomat, historian, researcher, spy, or the like. Combat-themed roles should be avoided if possible.

PURCHASING GEAR

Each character begins this chapter with one 13th-level item, two 12th-level items, one 11th-level item, two 10th-level items, and 1,500 gp to spend on any additional items. The characters already know each other, so they can pool their money to buy items. In addition, choose two of the following items to give to the group to distribute as they see fit: *anklets of alacrity*, *belt of giant strength*, *belt of regeneration*, *circlet of persuasion*, *diadem of intellect*, *headband of inspired wisdom*.

N. TALON CITADEL
1 SQUARE = 5 FEET
N12
N13
N9
N11
N10
N14
N8
N7
N15
N5
N4
N2
N6
N6
N1
N3
N
W
E
S

A Meeting in Caliphas

This chapter begins as Keleri Deverin, now a senior member of the Esoteric Order of the Palatine Eye, calls a hasty meeting with the order's Most Worthies (the PCs). Give the players a few moments to introduce their characters to each other, keeping in mind that these characters should all already know each other—encourage the players to come up with past escapades or adventures their characters may have shared.

Keleri has worked with the PCs as well, and thanks them for agreeing to meet with her on such short notice. While she wishes she could send the primary heroes on this mission, their recovery from the White Axiom ritual prevents this possibility, and so the mission she has must fall to other luminaries in the Esoteric Order. Read or paraphrase the following once you are ready to begin the chapter, as Keleri addresses the PCs.

"Thank you again for coming to meet me on such short notice, fellow Worthies. As you know, the White Axiom has been recovered, but this esoteric knowledge is merely a key to a lock we don't yet have—a tome called *The Last Theorem*. The process of deciphering the White Axiom has left our heroes fatigued and their recovery continues slowly, but with the acquisition of new information, we don't have the luxury of waiting for them to recover before taking the next step in opposing the Night Heralds.

"We have intercepted a missive meant for the Night Herald Necerion that suggests *The Last Theorem* resides within the fortress of a Shackles Free Captain: a pirate named Whark the Alabaster. The letter also contained an invitation to a gala held at Whark's fortress to celebrate the dedication of a new temple of the pirate goddess Besmara. This may give us the best opportunity we have to infiltrate Whark's fortress and seize the book before the Night Heralds can get ahold of it.

"Time is of the essence. The gala is scheduled to occur in three days. While we have secured teleportation to Plumetown, on the Smoker, the island where Whark's fortress is located, our window to access her fortress is limited. It seems that the temple's dedication has brought divine attention; there are rumors that the *Kelpie's Wrath*—a supernatural ship sacred to Besmara—is patrolling the waters surrounding the Smoker. Further, we have other interests in the Shackles that a direct conflict with one of the region's Free Captains would jeopardize. In order to secure *The Last Theorem*, we need a group that can be clandestine, cautious, fast, and above all else, successful. Out of us all, the group of you command the skills most likely to lead to success!"

Keleri can answer additional questions the PCs may have. Likely questions and their answers are given below. Some of these questions and responses may not come up until the players have a chance to read the handout.

Can we see the letter? "You can see a copy we made—we didn't want to tip our hand to Necerion that we'd learned about the letter's contents, so after the original was intercepted, our agent copied it and sent the original on its way after restoring its seal." (Keleri can supply the PCs with the copied letter at this point, which is reproduced as Player Handout #2 on page 73, along with a replica of the original red flag that the PCs can use as an invitation to the gala.)

What do you think of the letter? "The wording is evasive, suggesting the writer wanted to avoid potential recriminations. The misuse of 'theorem' is likely not coincidental. It seems the writer is going out of their way to tell Necerion that *The Last Theorem* is among Whark's trove in some inner sanctum without directly saying so. We have confirmed that Whark was part of a group who plundered the Pact Stone Pyramid some years back, which, according to more recent research, was a likely last known location of *The Last Theorem*."

What can you tell us of Captain Whark? "After her time in Osirion, she served as a companion of Tessa Fairwind's during Fairwind's rise to Hurricane Queen,

Playtest Goals

In previous chapters of *Doomsday Dawn*, the playtest has focused on the primary action of combat and exploration, both of which are key parts of Pathfinder. Yet there's more to this game than fighting and discovery. In "Red Flags," we seek to playtest the roleplaying part of the game. In addition, this chapter explores how high-level characters fare with skill use and investigation-themed adventures. While "Red Flags" does include some fights, the adventure favors cunning skill use and spellcasting, and we're particularly interested in how long this chapter remains both playable and fun without having to roll for initiative.

and she retains her favor to this day. That's one reason you must take care while retrieving *The Last Theorem*—we'd like to retrieve the tome but avoid incurring the queen's enmity. We know Whark is a white-feathered tengu who sails under an unadorned red flag. She has a reputation for luck and strange cunning. When Whark won the Free Captains' Regatta, Queen Fairwind awarded her a fortress on the Smoker, a remote volcanic island in the Shackles."

What about the Smoker? "It's a volcanic island that has been a pilgrimage spot for worshipers of Besmara for centuries. A trio of strange oracles who dwell in the volcanic caves are said to gain power from an unknown entity hidden deep within the volcano, though it's equally as plausible that they're just hallucinating due to the gases seeping up from the earth's depths. Regardless, where others just see a smoking oddity, it seems that Captain Whark sees opportunity. Now that she's a Free Captain, she's been building high-class lodgings, gambling halls, and brothels in Plumetown on the Smoker's lower slopes, catering to those waiting for occult revelation and captains wishing to winter or hide out in a remote corner of the Shackles."

What do we know of this mysterious "K?" "Unfortunately, not much. Our best guess is that our conspirator may be Kadhibat Alyamin, the scion of a family of slavers who sail yellow sails out of the slaver island Okeno. He's been a hostage of Whark's for nearly a year while waiting for his family to ransom him. According to our contacts in Okeno, the Alyamin family claims to have sent Kadhibat's ransom on three different occasions, and they have no idea why Whark has not sent the young man back to his family."

Have you tried to learn more via magical divinations? "We have, but the results are maddeningly vague. We believe this interference is due to the proximity of the *Kelpie's Wrath* to, and thus Besmara's interest in, the upcoming event. Her herald's presence does make this mission more difficult, as it would be prudent to avoid angering Besmara. Her ill favor could provoke raids on our ships and missions to Osirion and beyond. But the interference may instead be due to powerful wards on Whark's fortress. Of course, it could be a mixture of both."

About Necerion

The sorcerer Necerion has long been a thorn in the side of the Esoteric Order, and he has clashed with some of the order's agents numerous times—notably, with the specific PC selected as his nemesis. All of the PCs know that Necerion was once a Chelish diplomat stationed in Magnimar, and that he abandoned that post to pursue his father's work in exploring Osirion's tombs. Necerion's father was a man named Imivus, author of a tome called the *Aucturn Lexicon*. The only complete copy of this book now lies in the Grand Athenaeum of Cheliax and is said to be the authoritative work on the *countdown clocks*; Esoteric Order agents have managed to study this text several times over the past few years, and it is from its pages that much of their initial knowledge of the clocks came.

Information about Necerion today is harder to come by, but his PC nemesis knows a bit more. Inform the players via that PC that Necerion is a sorcerer with the aberrant bloodline—evil, ruthless, and very motivated in his devotion to the Night Heralds. That PC knows several of Necerion's favored spells and magic items. Among his spells, he particularly favors the use of *black tentacles*, *drop dead*, *mind probe*, and *synaptic pulse*. He's also known to own the following magic items: a *cape of the mountebank*, a *greater mentalist's staff*, and a pair of *slippers of spider climbing*. Just as the nemesis PC knows a bit about Necerion, Keleri warns that character that Necerion might know quite a bit about them as well. Attending the gala in disguise might be a good idea for this PC, since it is certain that Necerion will be in attendance as well. This makes it all the more important to secure *The Last Theorem* as quickly and quietly as possible.

Arrival in Plumetown

Plumetown is a bustling but relatively small port with a population of 1,130, but daily traffic in and out of the town helps to keep the mix of those on the streets quite diverse—as a result, the PCs should find it easy to fit in with the residents. Originally something of a ramshackle town, Plumetown is today in the midst of transformation. Shoddy buildings are being replaced by whitewashed villas and classy edifices. The muddy tracks are being paved over with cobblestone, and everything has the feel of the influx of new money. All over the town flies the unadorned red flag that symbolizes the reign of Free Captain Whark.

The town has its pockets of raucous behavior, but is in good spirits overall. The buzz on nearly everyone's lips is the gala celebrating the town's new temple to Besmara and numerous sightings of the *Kelpie's Wrath* off the island's shore, which is considered a sign of the goddess's favor.

Each PC can attempt to Gather Information once before the gala begins. Money talks in Plumetown, so for every 300 gp a PC spreads around, he gains a +1 circumstance bonus to the Diplomacy check (up to a +3 circumstance bonus after spending 900 gp). The following four topics can provide the PCs with helpful information.

Besmara and the Kelpie's Wrath

The consensus is that the *Kelpie's Wrath* signals Besmara's blessing. People avoid speaking ill of the Queen of Pirates—such talk often begets violence on the high seas. But some know the real reason for the divine herald's visit.

With a successful DC 25 Diplomacy check, a PC learns that "Besmara is neither forgiving nor trusting. The *Kelpie's Wrath* is a reminder to that wily Captain Whark that the dedication is a serious matter."

On a critical success, a PC also hears, "We don't like

Greetings, Master Necerion,

I do not merely address this to you, an individual, but also to others of your acquaintance. I serve Free Captain Whark the Alabaster, come lately to her lordship on the isle known as the Smoker after securing fame and glory by winning last year's Free Captains' Regatta. What you may not know is that my master was an adventurer before she became a pirate and a Free Captain, and spent much of that time exploring sites in Osirion, including the Pact Stone Pyramid. Among the treasures she pulled from that tomb, some scribblings pertinent to your current endeavors may now lie within my master's inner sanctum—at least, that's the theorem. But this I can neither confirm nor deny it.

Of course, such theorems demand proof. Toward that end, you'll find enclosed a red flag—as my master is well known for favoring such trinkets—that will serve as an invitation to a gala in celebration of the dedication of a new temple to Besmara within my master's Talon Citadel on 19 Lamashan, 4717 AR.

Yours,

—K

Player Handout #2

to speak of the Pirate Queen—faith's deeply personal. Dedicating a temple to Besmara curries her favor, but at a cost. A tithe must be paid to the sea, or Besmara will take five-fold, and in more painful ways. Whark's a tricky one and loves her shiny trinkets, but she'd best not try to cheat Besmara or we all might pay the price."

Asking too much about Besmara or the *Kelpie's Wrath* brings the Pirate Queen's ill favor, and on a critical failure, a PC suffers from Besmara's curse (mental, emotion, fear). From fixations on tsunamis to terror about what kind of punishment the *Kelpie's Wrath* might unleash, or even nagging worries of tentacled things crawling out of the depths, the thoughts of a creature suffering from Besmara's curse swirl with the terror of what the sea might hold. For the next week, any PC suffering from Besmara's curse can't take reactions and is hampered 10—this effect is suppressed if the PC is more than 10 miles from the sea, but no location in this adventure is so distant from the source of this fear. This divine curse cannot be removed by any effect short of a *wish* or *miracle*.

The Gala

Everyone in Plumetown has opinions on Whark's gala. It's going to be the event of the year, and the captain is going all out. Half the town's been invited, and more guests have been streaming in for days. With a successful DC 25 Diplomacy check, the PC hears, "I heard that Whark's looking to pay her dues for sinking a ship full of Besmarans a while back, a ship called *Blackguard's Revenge*. Heard all hands and all treasure were lost. If Cap'n Whark can throw a fancy enough party, maybe Besmara will forgive her. But the Pirate Queen don't smile on boring parties!"

On a critical success, the PC also hears, "Oh, it'll be a fun party, but stay away from the gambling tables. Rumor has it that hags cursed them to favor the house. They're all rigged. Cap'n Whark's going to liquor up half the island—the rich half—and bilk them out of a fortune. That's how the cap'n plans on paying her tithe to the Pirate Queen."

The Mysterious "K"

If the PCs ask around for those close to Free Captain Whark whose names might start with the letter K, they draw strange and suspicious looks. The folk of Plumetown respect anonymity for themselves and others. Still, there's always someone who'll talk, and a PC who succeeds at a DC 33 Diplomacy check hears, "Well, I guess it's no secret Whark's been holding Kadhibat Alysamin for a year. I guess he'd count. Rumor has it Alysamin's not keen on release. He's the son of some slaver in Katapesh, they say. The Garundi lad and Cap'n Whark seem rather... well... chummy."

On a critical success, a PC also hears, "Well there's Kadhibat Alysamin, that's for sure. But it's whispered the Captain has a devil working for her. Her name is Kasbeel. Never seen her though, and don't want to. But it may all be a story Whark concocted to scare folks."

On a critical failure, word gets back to Kadhibat that folks are asking about him, and he gains descriptions of those asking around. This worries the young man and puts the PCs on a bad footing when they meet him.

Necerion

Necerion has been in town for the last couple of days. Although he has not disguised himself, he's been going by the name Imivus. Asking around about Necerion by name

alone provides no intelligence, but if the PCs describe him while Gathering Information and succeed at a DC 24 Diplomacy check, their investigation bears fruit: "Oh, I think I saw someone like that—seemed a bit older than the fellow you're looking for though. I think he came in with the *Maiden's Lament* just a couple of days ago. Unfortunately, that ship left yesterday. I have no idea if your friend was aboard upon departure."

With a critical success, the PC also hears, "Oh yeah, he's aged a bit, but I've seen him around. I think he is staying in Talon Citadel. Maybe he's one of the Captain's special guests?"

Even if the PCs don't use Necerion's description when asking around, they should attempt the skill check; on a critical failure, an agent of Kasbeel overhears the PCs asking about Necerion and reports back to the devil with descriptions of the questioners. While Kasbeel doesn't warn the Night Herald, the information grants Kasbeel a +4 circumstance bonus to Perception checks against any PCs attempting to Lie to her.

THE GALA

Once the PCs are properly cleaned up and rested, and have gathered information in Plumetown, it's time for the gala to start. Captain Whark's Talon Citadel is about 2 miles out of town, accessible by a long winding cliff road overlooking the coastline's churning waters. What might be the start of a vicious storm has begun to roil in the distance, and the brisk wind often conveys chilly ocean spray, but the revelers are in good humor. Torches crackle, jugs of rum undergo a constant rotation, and bawdy songs drown all but the most powerful crashing of waves. The celebrants' mood is light and playful, with even bitter rivals toasting each other with mock praise and playful vulgarities. As the first tower of Talon Citadel comes into view, a large red flag can be seen stretched out across rectangular scaffolding. Scribed on the flag are the following words.

> "Welcome to the Blackguard's Revenge Temple Dedication. This gala is an area of parley. Draw no weapons and cast no spells! Those in violation of these rules will answer to Whark the Alabaster, Free Captain of the Smoker, and Besmara, who watches by way of her herald, the *Kelpie's Wrath*. You have been warned. Have a good time and give Besmara her due."

Much of this chapter is free-form and played in exploration mode within the common areas of Whark's stronghold. Instead of exploring a stretch of wilderness, the PCs are investigating numerous personalities at the party. While the PCs are free to act how they wish as they mingle with partygoers, partake in the food and rum, and even gamble with cards and dice at the various tables, the gala is restricted to the front portions of the Talon Citadel (areas **N1–N7**).

BREAKING THE RULES

Whark's gala is protected by more than mere warnings. She retains more than 60 veterans of her pirate raids as guards, all of whom are at the gala and keep their eyes out for trouble. In addition, Whark has received a temporary blessing from Besmara for the event, manifested in the creation of an additional ward: anyone who casts a spell within her citadel becomes outlined in *faerie fire* (8th level) for the next 24 hours. Being cloaked in this green flame alerts the guards—and perhaps Kasbeel (see Chief Players)—who give a warning for a first offense provided the spell was simple or did no harm, but firmly ask the character (or group of PCs) to leave if such trespasses to the parley continue or if the spell caused harm.

In the unlikely event that combat breaks out, the crowd at the gala serves as difficult terrain, and waves of five guards attack the PCs every 1d4 rounds. If the PCs are particularly hostile, Kasbeel joins the fray (see page 76). In such an event, Necerion uses the calamity to slip through the door leading to the inner sanctum, likely making it more difficult for the PCs to achieve their goal.

WHARK'S GUARDS **CREATURE 10**

Masterful rogues (*Pathfinder Playtest Bestiary*)

Initiative Stealth +20

CHIEF PLAYERS

While many colorful characters have been drawn to the gala, the most important personalities are detailed below. Each entry features social statistics, as well as details on the NPCs' reaction when the PCs approach them and background and motivations to aid you in conducting encounters with these characters.

KADHIBAT "KAD" ALYSAMIN (AREA N5)

With deep brown skin, a mop of dark wavy hair, and a roguish manner, Kadhibat (or Kad, as he prefers to be addressed) stands amid an adoring crowd of attractive young admirers of all genders. He tells a constant stream of stories, mainly focused on his exploits amid the gambling halls of Plumetown. His tales often feature witless friends, some of whom stand amid his entourage and love him all the more for their insertion into his escapades, regardless of their embarrassment. Kad is arrogant and callous, but also humorous or even playfully self-disparaging at times.

Kad ignores any PC beyond his crowd. Each PC who wants to make it close enough to gain the young man's attention must first cajole or push their way through the sizable crowd of moon-eyed sycophants. Doing so without creating outrage requires a PC to succeed at a DC 28 Acrobatics, Diplomacy, or Deception check.

Once a PC is close enough, they can sway Kad with flattery, guile, or a clever bit of music or dramatics, using a Diplomacy, Deception, or Performance check. The base DC for any of these checks is 30, but if the PCs either outraged the crowd on their approach or critically

failed the Gather Information check when attempting to ascertain who among Whark's court had a name that started with a "K," the DC is increased by 3. If the PCs made both of these mistakes, the DC is increased by 6.

Succeeding at any attempt to use flattery, guile, or performance to sway Kad is similar to success with the Make an Impression use of Diplomacy, but it makes him friendly for only a minute. On a critical success, the character gains 5 minutes with Kad instead. If the check was a critical failure and either Kad's attitude toward the PC drops below friendly or a PC attempts to use Intimidation on him, he refuses to talk to the PCs. His followers then taunt or physically push the PCs out of the crowd.

While Kad is technically Captain Whark's hostage, there's more to the story than that. Kad is a willing captive and accomplice to fraud against his slaver father. While it's true Whark captured Kad on a pirating raid against yellow-sailed slave ships, Kad had longed to be freed from his wicked family. After he'd been captured, he hatched a plan to bilk his father for ransom. Kad's father has paid the ransom three times now, but each time the payment approached the Shackles, Whark raided the ship carrying the treasure, sinking it with nearly all hands aboard. A scattering of the surviving crew members—those who wisely surrendered to Whark—now serve the Free Captain. The captain holds Kad's half of the ransoms for any time the young man wants to leave the Smoker and set out on his own, but Kad is happy living among the tengu's court for now.

Kad considers Whark a friend and a benefactor. He doesn't respond kindly to the PCs disparaging the tengu or suggesting that Kad might be willing to betray his friend. Bold accusations of betrayal or showing Kad the letter from "K" end any conversation, and Kad sends one of his friends to quietly warn Whark (though a PC can notice this with a successful DC 30 Perception check).

However, Kad is a wealth of information about others at the gala and loves to gossip. If asked about Kasbeel, he says, "That humorless drudge? She's the bean-counter, nothing more than a secretary. Whark refuses to tell me how she enthralled Kasbeel into her service. Kasbeel usually keeps quiet, though you can tell from her eyes that she's taking the measure of everyone she encounters. She's been very chatty with that scholar who's come to court, though... what's his name? Mivus? Imivus? Something like that. Prattles on and on about Osirian gobbledygook."

Kad also knows a bit more about Necerion, but only knows him by his Plumetown alias, Imivus. If asked about him, Kad says, "Creepy, scowling bugger. That gravelly voice just drones on and on about ridiculous bits of pseudo-science and Osirian superstitions. He wants to buy some treasure Captain Whark picked up years ago, but they can't settle on the price. I think Whark's toying with him. She doesn't give up her pretties often."

If asked about the Captain's pretties, Kad offers up this little insight into Whark's personality: "The captain is a bit of a magpie. I think she loves some treasures just because she has them. I've never seen her sell jewelry or other precious objects. She lines her nest with some of them, others she holds in some secure place. We all have our vices."

Kad's statistics include only his abilities relevant to social interaction.

Kadhibat Aysamin

GOING INCOGNITO

Many PCs, either through prudence or paranoia, may want to disguise themselves before going to the gala. Doing so uses the Impersonate use of the Deception skill, modified by any spells or magic items the PC uses. This is a secret roll, so roll for each disguised PC at the start of the gala. Unless a PC later uses a spell or a magic item to change their disguise, use the results of these rolls throughout the adventure.

KADHIBAT ALYSAMIN (KAD) — CREATURE 8

Human
Humanoid
Medium

Perception +15
Will +15
Skills +6; Deception +17, Diplomacy +17, Intimidation +15
Languages Common, Osiriani, Tengu
Int +2, **Wis** +0, **Cha** +4

Kasbeel (Area N8)

Kasbeel is a relatively new addition to the Talon Citadel, and one most of Whark's guards worry about. Kasbeel is soft-spoken, thinks before she acts, and generally prefers to lurk quietly in the back of a crowd, yet her appearance and nature often make her the most intimidating presence in a room—for Kasbeel is a contract devil. With dark red skin, an array of long horns curving from her body and draped with contracts, and fiery orange robes gilt with gold, she is an impossible figure to ignore.

Kasbeel certainly has secrets, not the least of which is that she is the mysterious "K" who invited Necerion to Whark's gala. Decades ago, Kasbeel sought to bind Paracount Imivus to her will, but was tricked by the canny diabolist. Using ancient ciphers and his knack for finding loopholes, Imivus was able to turn Kasbeel's words against her and instead

bound the devil to aid in his search for *The Last Theorem* and other evidence of alien influence over ancient Osirion. She was not at Imivus's side when he met his doom in the Veinstone Pyramid, at which point the debt she owed him transferred to his son, Necerion. She met Necerion not long after he abandoned Magnimar, and secured an addendum to her terms—if she could deliver the location of *The Last Theorem* to his hands, she would be set free.

Since then, the contract devil has been searching for the ancient tome, a search that brought her to the Smoker when she followed Whark's trail after the pirate's prior adventuring party looted the Pact Stone Pyramid. She spent several months ingratiating herself to Whark via messages from afar before revealing her true nature to Whark a few months ago. She had hoped to tempt the Free Captain with an infernal contract and then learn all of her secrets, but Whark was too canny for her and didn't take the bait. Never one to rush, Kasbeel resorted to a deliberately paced method of using magic and networks of spies to learn more about Whark's fortress. She's only recently been allowed into the fortress and isn't willing to risk her own well-being exploring what she (rightly) suspects is a well-defended vault, but she's now convinced that *The Last Theorem* is kept somewhere within the citadel's treasury.

When Whark announced the gala, Kasbeel knew it was an excellent chance to invite Necerion and grant him access to the inner sanctum. While the contract devil suspects what dangers exist in Whark's nest (area **N11**), she has no clue as to what dangers lie beyond. At this point, she's unlocked the door leading from the landing to Whark's nest, given Necerion the passphrase for the trap beyond the door, and told him to use the central wardrobe to find the passage into the rest of the inner sanctum. They now merely wait for the Free Captain's next procession to the temple of Besmara, at which point Kasbeel plans on joining the procession while Necerion enters the inner sanctum.

Unless word that the PCs are asking questions around town has gotten back to Kasbeel, she takes no notice of their initial approach. If she's speaking to Necerion at the time, though, he notices his nemesis PC unless that PC is successfully disguised, and he quietly warns Kasbeel that the PCs may be rivals in the search for *The Last Theorem* (a PC can overhear this whispered message with a successful DC 29 Perception check). The contract devil's loyalty to Necerion prevents her from willingly divulging information to the PCs, but neither does she stand in their way—after all, if Necerion perishes to the PCs, the terms of her servitude end as well, provided she didn't break her contract to directly betray the Night Herald.

KASBEEL, CONTRACT DEVIL — CREATURE 15

Devil
Evil
Fiend
Lawful
Medium

Perception +27, greater darkvision

Languages Abyssal, Aklo, Celestial, Common, Draconic, Infernal, Undercommon; *tongues*, telepathy 100 feet

Skills +18; Arcana +28, Diplomacy +29, Deception +29, Intimidation +27, Legal Lore +30, Planar Lore +28, Society +28, Stealth +26

Str +3, **Dex** +4, **Con** +4, **Int** +7, **Wis** +6, **Cha** +6

AC 35, **TAC** 32; **Fort** +22, **Ref** +23, **Will** +27, +1 conditional to all vs. magic

HP 260; **Immunities** fire; **Resistances** physical 10 (except silver), poison 10; **Weaknesses** good 10

Speed 25 feet

◆ **Melee** binding contract +28 (agile, disarm, reach 10 feet, trip), **Damage** 6d8+3 slashing plus infernal wound and grab

horn +28, **Damage** 6d10+3 and infernal wound

Divine Innate Spells DC 33; **Constant** *detect alignment* (good only), *detect magic, tongues*; **8th** *unrelenting observation*; **7th** *fireball, illusory scene, lightning bolt*, *silence*, *warp mind*; **5th** *dimension door*, *mind probe*; **3rd** *paralyze*; **At Will** *dimension door*, *locate* (5th), *mind reading, sending, scrying* (10th, see infernal investment)

Rituals *infernal pact* (*Pathfinder Playtest Bestiary*)

◆◆◆ **Draft Contract** (divine, enchantment, manipulate) Kasbeel produces an infernal contract for a single living mortal. This contract can grant a wide range of abilities and effects (see Kasbeel's Infernal Contracts on page 77). To receive any of those benefits, the mortal must willingly sign its true name to the contract. At that point, the mortal's soul is bound to Kasbeel and Hell.

While the contract is in effect, the victim can't be restored to life except by *miracle*, *wish*, or similar magic. If the mortal is restored to life by those means, Kasbeel knows which mortal came back to life and can locate the creature or creatures who restored the mortal back to life for 1 year, gaining the effects of a *locate* spell with unlimited range. Avoiding the terms of an infernal contract is difficult and often dangerous.

Infernal Investment Kasbeel can cast her 10th-level innate *scrying* spell at will, but only if she targets a creature she has a contract with. The creature automatically critically fails its save.

Infernal Wound (divine, necromancy) A wound caused by Kasbeel's horn or binding contract also deals 2d6 persistent bleed damage that's difficult to heal. The flat check DC starts out at 21 and drops to 16 if the affected target or an ally successfully aids in recovery.

The DC to Administer First Aid to a creature with an infernal wound is increased by 2. A caster or item attempting to use healing magic on a creature suffering from an infernal wound must succeed at a DC 33 spell roll or the magic fails to heal the wounded creature.

Necerion (Area N8)

Necerion is focused on his prize. Kasbeel has unlocked the door leading into the inner sanctum, and as the PCs arrive, Necerion waits for the chance to move into the inner sanctum with his goblin butler, unseen by the rest of the partygoers, during Whark's next procession to deliver the tributes to the temple. Unless he recognizes his nemesis PC, Necerion takes no notice of the party. If he does notice them, he warns Kasbeel, who he hopes will distract the PCs long enough for him to slip through the door.

In any case, Necerion has no interest in speaking to the PCs at this point—he's most likely to confront the PCs in battle later in the chapter.

NECERION — CREATURE 15

Evil
Human
Humanoid
Medium

Perception +29
Languages Ancient Osiriani, Common, Infernal, Osiriani
Skills +16; Acrobatics +26, Deception +26, Diplomacy +28, Dominion of the Black Lore +30, Intimidation +28, Occultism +28, Society +28, Stealth +26
Str +2, **Dex** +4, **Con** +3, **Int** +5, **Wis** +4, **Cha** +5
Items *+4 returning keen dagger*, *bracers of armor* (6th), *cape of the mountebank*, *mentalist's staff* (greater, 8 charges), *scroll of teleport* (6th), *slippers of spider climbing*, letter from Aeteperax

AC 34, **TAC** 34; **Fort** +22, **Ref** +23, **Will** +23, +1 conditional vs. all magic
HP 235
Reflect Spell
Trigger A creature casts a spell Necerion knows and he can observe the casting.
Effect Necerion expends one of his spells to counter the triggering creature's casting of that same spell. He loses his spell slot as if he had cast the triggering spell. He then attempts to dispel the triggering spell. If he succeeds and the spell targeted either one or more creatures or an area, he can turn that spell's effect back on its caster. When reflected, the spell affects only the caster, even if it's an area spell or the spell would normally affect more than one creature. The caster can attempt to save or use other defenses against the reflected spell as normal.

Speed 25 feet
Melee *+4 returning keen dagger* +26 (agile, magical), **Damage** 5d4+2 plus 2d6 poison
Ranged *+4 returning keen dagger* +26 (agile, magical, thrown 10 feet), **Damage** 5d4+2 plus 2d6 poison
Occult Spontaneous Spells DC 33, attack +26; **8th** (2 slots) *disappearance*, *dispel magic*, *mind blank*, *paralyze*; **7th** (3 slots) *dispel magic*, *paralyze*, *prismatic spray*, *reverse gravity*, *warp mind*; **6th** (4 slots) *dispel magic*, *feeblemind*, *paralyze*, *repulsion*, *vampiric exsanguination, wall of force*; **5th** (4 slots) *black tentacles*, *dispel magic*, *drop dead*, *mind probe*, *paralyze*, *synaptic pulse*; **4th** (4 slots) *dimension door*, *dispel magic*, *fly*, *paralyze*, *phantasmal killer*, *suggestion*; **3rd** (4 slots) *dispel magic*, *haste*, *heroism*, *paralyze*; **2nd** (4 slots) *darkvision*, *false life*, *mirror image*, *see invisibility*; **1st** (4 slots) *charm*, *illusory disguise*, *ray of enfeeblement*, *true strike*; **Cantrips** *detect magic*, *light*, *mage hand*, *message*, *telekinetic projectile*
Sorcerer Powers 7 Spell Points, DC 32; **8th** *aberrant whispers* (2 Spell Points), *tentacular limbs* (1 Spell Point), *unusual anatomy* (2 Spell Points)
Quickened Casting
Frequency once per day
Trigger Necerion begins casting a 6th-level or lower sorcerer spell that requires at least 2 spellcasting actions to cast.
Effect Necerion chooses one of that spell's spellcasting actions. He doesn't need to use that action in order to finish casting the spell.
Steady Spellcasting Necerion's spells are disrupted by reactions only if he takes 31 or more damage, even if the reaction normally disrupts manipulate actions automatically.
Stealth Spell
Trigger Necerion begins casting a spell that requires 2 or fewer spellcasting actions to complete.
Effect Necerion adds a Somatic Casting action to the triggering spell and attempts a Stealth check against observers' Perception DC. If he succeeds, the observer does not notice that he has cast the spell; if the spell has a Verbal Casting action, he must also succeed at a Deception check against the observers' Perception DC or the spell is noticed. This conceals only the actions to Cast the Spell, not the spell's effect.

KASBEEL'S INFERNAL CONTRACTS

While numerous types of infernal contracts exist, the following is Kasbeel's favorite.

Evil Wish: Upon signing this type of infernal contract, the mortal gains the effects of a *wish*, but must use the *wish* within 24 hours of signing the contract. While the mortal determines the intention of the *wish*, the contract devil decides upon the specifics (which need fulfill only the literal wording of the *wish*—Kasbeel enjoys the game of creative interpretations of wording to engineer the *wish* so that it plays out to her advantage).

While Necerion's gear is valuable, a short and disturbing letter he carries may be of even greater value to the PCs in the final chapter. This letter is from Necerion's ally Aeteperax and mentions a site called the Valley of the Pyramids. A PC who succeeds at a DC 32 Arcana or Society check recalls that Aeteperax was a green dragon who dwelled in the central Verduran Forest and dabbled in lore associated with the Dominion of the Black, but who was slain by dragonslayers some years back. With a successful DC 24 Occultism check, a PC can pinpoint the location of the Valley of the Pyramids in eastern Osirion; on a critical success, the PC also recalls the fact that adventurers reported encountering a countdown wall on an expedition to this site. Aeteparax's letter is reproduced as **Player Handout #3** on page 79.

WHARK THE ALABASTER (AREA N8)

Free Captain Whark holds court for the duration of this chapter, accepting offerings from the constant line of people ushered past her by her entourage.

When people talk about Whark the Alabaster, they do so in a jumble of contradictions. Many describe the albino tengu as more than a little off, aloof or at least mercurial, and always whimsical or just plain odd. Others think she is an erratic genius, or somehow blessed by the gods.

In truth, the Free Captain has lived a charmed life. At times she's almost fumbled through it, but even in the darkest of nights, her luck has provided opportunity. She's plundered ancient tombs, saved petty kingdoms, fought great beasts, and eventually sailed the high seas with a crew on the verge of mutiny. One dead captain later, Whark was a bona fide pirate—and good enough that the lifestyle stuck.

At first, Whark was considered by others on the ship to be a mascot of sorts. Through blind luck and her strange, unpredictable cunning, she won both her ship and eventually the notice of a fellow Free Captain, Tessa Fairwind. For a time, she brought the albino tengu captain under her banner, amused by her antics and intrigued by the strange and often insightful ways she viewed situations, be they negotiation or battle. Whark was instrumental in Fairwind's rise as the Hurricane Queen. Whark's own rise to power continued with her recent win in the annual Free Captains' Regatta, after which the Hurricane Queen granted her the port of Plumetown as her own. Enriched by her adventures, Free Captain Whark dedicated herself to making Plumetown a port of both pilgrimage and luxury. She knows most trade ships avoid the volcanic island, but as pirates prefer out-of-the-way and no-questions-asked hideouts, there's never any lack of visitors. Stocking the town with clean rooms, gambling halls, taverns, and brothels, Whark has made Plumetown a port of call.

If the PCs approach Whark, she is gracious in thanking them for attending, though a PC who succeeds at a DC 30 Perception check notices something quizzical in her expression, as if she were trying to recognize the PCs, though she doesn't say anything to that end. If the PCs give the Free Captain a present worth at least 600 gp, she clasps their hands and tells them, "May Besmara bless your adventures, my friends." After that, her handlers move the PCs along so others can wish Whark well.

Whark has no idea that Kasbeel has gone behind her back and intends to let Necerion rob her vault. If the PCs attempt to warn Whark of this, they'll need to Request that she accepts their aid and information with a successful Diplomacy check. On a success, Whark asks the PCs to stay quiet and let Necerion enter the inner sanctum before they follow him inside. Whark tells the PCs the passphrase for the trap in her nest (a phrase in tengu that means "red flag") and of the door leading deeper into the sanctum. On a critical success, Whark trusts the PCs enough to tell them about all of the defenses in areas **N11–N15**, while on a critical failure, Whark grows enraged and orders the PCs to leave the gala at once.

If the PCs secure Whark's cooperation, she gladly allows them to take *The Last Theorem* as their prize and promises to cooperate more with the Esoteric Order in the future.

Whark's statistics include only her abilities relevant to social interaction.

Necerion

CAPTAIN WHARK — CREATURE 13

Humanoid Medium Tengu

Perception +22, low-light vision
Will +22
Skills +11; Deception +26, Diplomacy +25, Intimidation +22, Performance +26
Int +4, **Wis** +3, **Cha** +4

TALON CITADEL

The outer fortress is constructed of coquina, a local sedimentary rock composed of the shells of various sea-dwelling invertebrates. The slightly pink rock is durable and very

effective at absorbing the force of cannon fire and other kinetic siege weapons.

N1. Cliff Path End

Just beyond the large banner, the path slopes rather steeply down to the area just outside of the keep's first "talon"—one of two protruding 20-foot-tall bastions fitted with siege weapons. The path around the fortress is paved with cobblestones, narrowing significantly past the point of the talon to just large enough for a pair of horses and their riders to stride abreast. Past that point, the path grants a view of the Deep Harbor Court (**N2**), the Temple of Besmara (**N3**), and the eastern bastion (**A6**).

N2. Deep Harbor Court

A large, cobblestone-paved, open-air court nestles between the talons, with the citadel entrance to the north and the deep harbor beyond to the south. While the court is normally patrolled by Captain Whark's guards, it is now lined with partygoers hoping to catch a glimpse of the *Kelpie's Wrath* or to admire the violent beauty of the incoming storm. Whark does not allow smoking within her keep's gates, so the court bustles with small pockets of partygoers enjoying tobacco and passing around jugs. Some play dice, hoping to get in a "fair game."

If the PCs wait here long enough, they witness one of Captain Whark's hourly patrols, flanked by a half-dozen guards, as she takes another offering of coins and gems through the three courts and outside to the newly dedicated temple. Upon reaching the circular dock of the Pirate Queen's temple (area **N3**), she dumps the treasure (the latest winnings of the house from the game tables) into the water, where it comes to rest amid the wreckage of the *Blackguard's Revenge*.

N3. Temple of Besmara

Just 6 months ago, a rival of Whark's (a half-orc named Sawtooth) attempted a raid on Plumetown and Talon Citadel. The raid was an utter debacle, with Plumetown's defenders easily repelling the raiders and Whark's own citadel defenses dealing Sawtooth's flagship, the *Blackguard's Revenge*, a crippling blow as it approached the fortresses. Whark's guards seized control of the ship, but rather than keep it, the tengu scuttled the ship just south of her fortress as a show of power. When it later became apparent that Captain Sawtooth had been one of Besmara's favored worshipers in the region, Captain Whark became a bit panicked. She consulted with many seers and priests, but ultimate decided to take the advice of a coven of sea hag sisters—Kletho, Kesth, and Khana. They told Whark that if she devoted the sunken ship to Besmara as a temple and held an extravagant enough dedication party in the temple's honor, the goddess might forgive her. Captain Whark took to the plan with a vengeance, sparing no expense and sending invitations across Avistan to friends and friends of friends alike.

Necerion,

I remain, of course, in your debt for your arrangement of my resurrection, but I grow weary of waiting out the years in this benighted desert. The Pendulum couldn't be safer in this demiplane—guarding it like some cur is below me. You realize, no doubt, that time passes slowly in this realm, and I have no desire to die of old age in this place. Furthermore, the Pendulum's swings have taken on a strangely erratic quality of late, and I suggest you return to the Valley of the Pyramids soon, both to observe this new development and, I humbly beg you, to release me from this prison.

-Aeteperax

Player Handout #3

Devotees of Besmara can access the new temple to offer their prayers and tithes by way of a long pier that provides access to the waves below. On clear days, the sunken wreckage—and possibly even the glimmer of tithed treasure—can be seen, but tonight the churning water is too dark. During the dedication, the sea hag sisters swim around the wreckage, gurgling prayers and guiding the offerings toward the center of the wreck. Each hour, when Whark and her progression make their way to the temple's pier, the hags break the surface, their chanted incantations issuing up as painfully shrill songs that carry over the roar of the waves and the crashing of the surf in the rhythm of a pirate's shanty.

N4. The Back Yard

This large, unpaved yard is occasionally used as temporary storage, but is clear and mostly abandoned tonight, with only the occasional pairing of lovers or conspirators seeking privacy in the rocky corners for short stints. Only the glimmers of light from the *everburning torches* on the closest talon (area **N6**) cast any illumination down here, and such light is spotty at best.

If the security switch is triggered in Whark's treasure vault (area **N15**), a momentary passage from the vault to this area opens up some 30 feet above the ground of the back yard, but traces of the magical passage are hard to spot from this end. If a PC happens to investigate

the exact area and succeed at a DC 39 Perception check, they note a strange patch of stone, and—with a subsequent successful DC 39 Arcana check—guesses it could be a magical passage. However, actually opening the passageway still requires a PC to use the switch in area **N15**.

N5. Fortress Court

Several tables, some quite makeshift, have been set up in this open-air, flagstone-paved courtyard, lit by several *everburning torches* in freestanding sconces. Each table features different games of cards and dice. While the gamblers and the spectators are very drunk and often rowdy, everyone is in good spirits and obeying the order of parley in this place.

In the southern corners of the fortress court are a pair of locked doors (Thievery DC 25; three successes to open). Each opens into a storeroom under one of the two talons that contains nothing more than food, water, firewood, repair materials, and stores of siege weapon ammunition. Nonetheless, if the PCs are caught picking the locks, the guards confront them.

The northern side of the court features a pair of stairs that lead up to the battlements atop the talons. These stairwells flank a wider flight that leads upward to the double door to the Pretty Court. Kadhibat Alysamin prefers to hold court at the western end of the patio here, entertaining a group of young admirers with stories of far-off Katapesh.

N6. Talons

The tops of the talons each hold an array of ballistae, catapults, and other siege engines, all of which have been partially dismantled in accordance with the order of parley. All are currently off their carriages. Numerous party-goers mill about up here, spilling drinks, gossiping, or hoping for a glimpse of the *Kelpie's Wrath* out at sea.

N7. Pretty Court

A half-dozen of Whark's guards, each dressed in smart, red naval coats, watch the double door leading to this place. They repel those who seem too drunk or belligerent, constraining their like to the Fortress Court (area **N5**). Decorated all in scarlet and alabaster, the so-called Pretty Court is a strange mix of striking and occasionally gaudy decor, as Whark has outfitted it with the wide array of things she thinks are pretty, regardless of whether they match the ambiance of the room.

Like the fortress court, this place bustles with gamblers and celebrants. Servants bring food and drink, and spirits are high. Here too, the tables are fixed to favor the house, but no one seems to mind overly much, as they're intoxicated on their pirate captain's largess. Whark and her retinue watch it all from the Captain's Perch (**N8**). Whark leaves this high ground on the hour every hour to make her offerings to Besmara.

N8. Captain's Perch

Decorated in a fashion similar to the Pretty Court, the Captain's Perch is reached by marble staircases on each side of the massive landing. Whark holds court on the central balcony, sitting on a pillowed throne made of teak carved into the shape of a bird's nest. Well-wishers and those wanting to pay tribute to the Free Captain with a gift are ushered up the western stairs and down the eastern stairs.

Whark is no fool—while she is a 13th-level rogue, she isn't particularly interested in fighting or combat. She pays her guards well to defend the fortress. If a fight does break out, she observes with amusement from afar, but flees combat if the PCs attempt to involve her at all. While well spoken and worldly, she has little to add to the adventure's plot, and is best used as background than the focus of any fights or encounters.

The first time the PCs enter this area, Kasbeel and Necerion are huddled in the northeast corner, deep in whispered conversation. Necerion's goblin butler lurks nearby, fetching his master a drink whenever his cup is empty. The two wait patiently for Whark's next procession to the temple so that Necerion can slip into Whark's chambers (area **N11**) and on to the rest of the inner sanctum.

N9. Kitchen

This massive kitchen is bustling with activity as various servants work to prepare the food and drink for those attending the gala. If PCs wander back here, they are met with shouts of "The food will be right out!" and "You're not supposed to be here!"

N10. Servant's Quarters

A door from the kitchen and one on the west side of the Pretty Court leads to a veritable warren of barracks and living chambers for Whark's guards, servants, and staff. Ten of Whark's guards are stationed here with orders to intercept anyone who may have wandered away from the party and escort them back to the festivities. While all the doors in this area are locked while the gala progresses (Thievery DC 25; three successes to open), if unlocked, the servant's quarters contain nothing of consequence.

The Inner Sanctum

Talon Citadel's inner sanctum is not protected by the spellcasting ward that governs guests at the gala, so the PCs can cast any spell they want here without raising any alarms. If Necerion was able to get past the doorway before the PCs, he and his butler enter Whark's Nest (area **N11**). Kasbeel has given him the secrets to getting past the various traps located in her master's first chamber, but from there, Necerion is on his own and soon becomes stymied by the chamber of shifting doors at area **N12**.

Once the PCs manage to make it into the inner sanctum, they leave the bustle of the gala behind and the remainder of "Red Flags" becomes a more traditional (if short) dungeon-crawl adventure.

N11. Whark's Nest — Low 14

A ten-foot-wide flight of stone stairs descends to a strange but opulent chamber. Beyond the foot of the stairs, the floor is decorated with seashells, some of which look quite sharp. A massive nest with many opulent silk pillows and downy blankets sits just beyond the dangerous-looking shell flooring. Ornate rugs are strewn around the nest, and various gems and bits of shiny jewelry are intertwined with the nest's branches. The far wall is decorated with a series of shelves covered with a dizzying array of sparkling treasures.

Whark

The strange flooring ends 20 feet into the room. The seashell floor is trapped and manifests spectral tentacles to lash out at any Tiny or larger creature who moves into the area without speaking the passphrase, which is a Tengu phrase that roughly translates to "red flag."

SPECTRAL TENTACLES — HAZARD 14

Complex Magical Trap

Stealth +29 (trained) or *detect magic*

Description A spectral tentacle winds up from the seashell-covered floor, grabbing and siphoning the life force from its target.

Disable spell DC 30 (7th level) to dispel the tentacles before they trigger, Thievery DC 33 (master) to disable the motion-sensing runes hidden in the first 5-foot area of the trap, or uttering the passphrase in the room to bypass the trap and deactivate it for 10 minutes

AC 34; **TAC** 31; **Fort** +20, **Ref** +25

Hardness 20 (2 Dents) per tentacle; **Immunities** critical hits, object immunities, precision damage

First Lash (occult, incorporeal, necromancy)

Trigger A creature moves into the area with the seashells. This includes jumping or flying, but not teleporting.

Effect A tentacle emerges from the floor, making a melee Strike at the creature who triggered the trap.

Routine (up to 6 actions) On its initiative, one additional tentacle emerges from the floor (up to the trap's total of six tentacles) and attacks a creature on the floor or within the tentacle's reach. Each tentacle can spend 1 action to Strike or Constrict and has its own separate multiple attack penalty.

Melee spectral lash +27 touch (reach 10 feet), **Damage** 6d8 negative damage and improved grab

Constrict The tentacles deals 20 negative damage, and a living target must succeed at a DC 31 Fortitude save or become drained 1. Each additional failed Fortitude save increases the drained value by 1.

Improved Grab

Trigger A tentacle hits a creature with a spectral lash Strike.

Effect The tentacle grabs the triggering creature, as the grab ability.

Reset The trap resets after 24 hours.

The trio of massive teak shelves on the far wall not only hide a secret door, but also present a second dangerous trap. Whark doesn't use the left and the right wardrobes, and the apparent treasures on their shelves are fake jewels and worthless trinkets (as a PC can determine with a successful DC 21 Crafting check or DC 24 Perception check). These false treasures and the shelves themselves are coated with dragon bile contact poison (*Pathfinder Playtest Rulebook* 364). The poison can be detected with a successful DC 40 Perception check and removed with a successful DC 30 Thievery check.

The middle wardrobe is filled with the tengu's favorite clothes—from ornate outfits to his treasured battered ponchos. Beyond this mass of clothing hanging haphazardly on hooks and hangers is a concealed, rather flimsy door held closed by a simple latch. A PC can locate this hidden door with a successful DC 20 Perception check.

Those interested in robbing the Free Captain can gain 600 gp worth of gems and jewelry for every minute they spend looting the room, to a maximum of 6,000 gp after 10 minutes of work.

N12. Shifting Portals

The condition of this room depends on whether or not Necerion and his butler got here before the PCs. If they did, the butler hangs dead on the spikes and the Night Herald stands in the southeast corner of the room, cloaked by his *disappearance* spell, hoping to learn the secret of passing through the doors by observing the PCs' attempts.

Three portals of shimmering force are set side-by-side the eastern wall of this otherwise empty chamber. Opposite these fields of force, a group of sharp iron spikes jut from the wall.

At any single point in time, one of the three shimmering curtains of force allows a single creature to pass through it, giving the creature a gentle nudge forward on the way through, while the other two violently repel the creature, pushing it forcefully toward the chamber's west wall. Which of the three fields of force serves as the entrance and which repel changes each time

a creature attempts to use a doorway. Regardless of whether the creature successfully passes through the portal, the safe portal shifts one position to the north (or down to the southernmost portal if the last open portal was the most northern). The central portal is currently the safe portal; once someone tries to step through any of the portals, the safe portal shifts to the northern portal (whether or not the central portal was tried). The next time someone attempts to enter a portal, the safe portal shifts to the southern portal, and the next time it shifts back to the central portal again.

If Necerion approached this chamber first, he tried an incorrect portal and was repelled (though he succeeded at his Fortitude save and thus took no damage). Then, worried about the spikes, he sent his goblin butler to try a different portal, but he too chose incorrectly and was repelled—he failed his saving throw and was flung back onto the spikes, which killed him. Necerion then decided to let the PCs ascertain the portals' secrets.

REPELLING PORTAL — HAZARD 14

Simple Magical Trap

Stealth DC 10 or *detect magic*

Description Two out of three shimmering curtains of force repel those who try to enter.

Disable spell DC 30 (7th level) to dispel one of the portals so that doorway is always safe to enter, Arcana DC 39 to determine which portal is currently safe and bypass the trap, or bypass by entering the safe portal by luck or trial and error

◇ **Repel Intruders** (arcane, force)

Trigger A creature attempts to pass through either of the two repelling portals.

Effect The creature is pushed back, depending on its Fortitude save (DC 32).

Success The creature is pushed back 10 feet.

Critical Success The creature is pushed back 5 feet.

Failure The creature is pushed back 20 feet, taking 4d8 bludgeoning damage if it hits the wall without the spikes, or 8d8 piercing damage if it hits the wall with the spikes.

Critical Failure Per failure, but the creature takes double damage.

Reset The portal resets instantly and can spend as many free actions as necessary to repel creatures that attempt to pass through.

N13. Dangerous Second Steps

The roar of churning water fills this massive chamber, which is some seventy feet across. The floor drops away for most of the length into a vast pit of surging seawater, amid which rise several stony pillars. The sides of these pillars are jagged, but the tops are relatively flat, though they're covered with strips of seaweed and seething with crustaceans while being constantly splashed by the waves below.

While this chamber is not technically a hazard, it does present some danger. The various rocks can be leaped upon, but because the surfaces feature a mixture of rough and slick textures, a PC must succeed at a DC 28 Acrobatics check to land upon one or to Grab an Edge. Every other round, the surging water splashes over the stones, forcing each creature atop a pillar to attempt a DC 22 Athletics check to avoid being knocked off the rock into the water.

Complicating passage through the room is the fact that the rocks are unstable and held upright by invisible magical energies. When a second creature steps on the same stone within an hour, the energies supporting that stone shut down, causing the stone to collapse and the creature to fall into the rough water.

Once a character is in the churning water, they can Swim with a successful DC 30 Athletics check. The water is 20 feet deep.

N14. Hall of Mirrors — Trivial 14

This large room is empty, save for six iron-framed, ten-foot-wide mirrors affixed firmly to the floor.

The arrows on each mirror show the direction of each mirror's reflective surface. Each of the various mirrors in this hall is a simple version of the darkside mirror trap, except that each mirror can use Reflection of Evil only on a creature within 20 feet of each mirror's reflective surface, and only once every 24 hours.

While each mirror might be less powerful than the complex trap of the same type, the duplicates that come out of the mirrors are devious creatures aware of the other mirrors' powers and limitations. They attempt to draw or force the PCs into the areas of the other mirrors.

DARKSIDE MIRROR — HAZARD 14

Pathfinder Playtest Bestiary

N15. Vault of The Last Theorem — Extreme 14

This massive sea cave roars with the sound of water rushing in and out through some subterranean channel. The water crashes some five feet or so below the entry ledge, sometimes powerful enough to kick up spray. Snaking along the wall to the south and east is a ledge that slopes upward, making its way toward a pillar encrusted with sea life rising from the center of the cave. Surrounded by water, its flat top holds a vault-like building made of a dark gray metal seemingly not corroded by its wet and salty environment.

The floor of the flat-topped pillar of stone in the room's center is 20 feet higher than the sea cave's entrance, but the path hugging the side walls slopes upward so that the ledge at its end is only 5 feet lower than the top of the pillar and the floor of the vault. The vault is made of iron, with the inner walls plated in a layer of lead. A single iron door graces the east side of the vault—this magically reinforced door has Hardness 20 and can withstand 6 Dents. Unless the door is open, the vault's walls cannot be penetrated by teleportation or divination magic of any kind.

The vault lock is a 14th-level magic item and can be opened if a PC succeeds at five successful DC 33 Thievery checks to Pick the Lock. If any of those attempts is a critical success, a PC also discovers an additional security switch. Once a PC has noticed the security switch, they can disable it with three successful DC 35 Thievery checks, but a critical failure on one of these checks immediately activates the switch (see Hazard below). If the security switch is not disabled, it triggers 3 rounds after the vault is opened.

The water below is 30 feet deep, and swimming requires a successful DC 22 Athletics check.

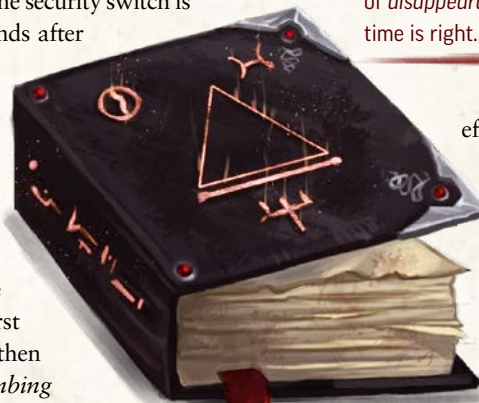
If Necerion has followed the PCs this far, he attacks them once the vault has been breached, first casting *reverse gravity*, and then using his *slippers of spider climbing* to mitigate its effects on him so he can snatch the book. He then attempts to escape to an area where he can safely use his *scroll of teleport* to flee the island.

The true danger within the room, though, is a kraken that Free Captain Whark spared no expense in capturing and binding into the chamber as his vault's guardian. The magical effect was placed by a powerful spellcaster to bind the kraken to this room and also compel it to guard the treasure. This is a 9th-level mental enchantment spell. If this effect is dispelled or otherwise removed, the kraken immediately abandons the chamber, swimming to freedom through a long submerged tunnel. Otherwise, the kraken surges up out of the water to attack intruders as soon as they enter the area, fighting to the death.

KRAKEN **CREATURE 18**

Pathfinder Playtest Bestiary

Initiative Perception +30

If the security switch activates, the vault door (assuming it remains intact) slams shut. Opening the door from inside is even trickier than from outside: without access to the lock, a PC must use force or succeed at five DC 35 Thievery checks to open the door. Even if the door doesn't slam shut, the sea cave begins to rumble once the security switch is triggered. During the first 5 rounds of rumbling, the entire area shakes, turning the solid ground areas in the cave into difficult terrain and imposing a –2 circumstance penalty on attack rolls and skill checks made by creatures on the ground. On the sixth round, a wall of the cave collapses, opening into a tunnel that leads to area **N4** and granting the PCs and maybe Necerion an avenue of escape. On the tenth round, the ceiling collapses, and creatures in the sea cave must succeed at a DC 33 Reflex saving throw or suffer the effects of an *earthquake* spell. At this point, the pillar holding the vault collapses into the water of the sea cave. While the vault doesn't fill with water if the door is closed, this makes escape from it even more difficult.

NECERION'S PASSAGE

If he is not detected, Necerion follows the PCs as they move deeper into the inner sanctum, learning from their mistakes in area **N13** and easily bypassing the mirrors in **N14** (since he is evil and can't activate the traps), before heading to **N15**. Even there, he remains invisible, using extra castings of *disappearance* if necessary and attacking only when the time is right.

THE LAST THEOREM

Once inside the vault, the PCs find a large room filled with many locked coffers and chests. Amid all the treasures on display, *The Last Theorem* is not difficult to find, sitting atop a lectern in the northwest corner of the room. The remaining treasures in the vault are all quite valuable, but stealing them will put the Esoteric Order at further odds with key players in the Shackles. Furthermore, since the players won't be playing these characters in the seventh and final chapter of *Doomsday Dawn*, the exact nature of these treasures is largely irrelevant for the purposes of this adventure.

CONCLUDING THE CHAPTER

The final chapter of *Doomsday Dawn* assumes that the PCs manage to recover *The Last Theorem* so that the primary heroes can use the legendary book to save the world. If the PCs lose the book after the vault collapses as a result of the security switch being triggered, you can assume that other agents (perhaps even this chapter's PCs) dig through the ruins and eventually retrieve the book—because it's an artifact, a cave-in and a soak in the ocean won't hurt *The Last Theorem*.

If, on the other hand, Necerion manages to escape with *The Last Theorem*, you have two choices. You can either explain to the players that in the 2 years following this chapter's debacle, agents of the Esoteric Order managed to steal *The Last Theorem* from Necerion, or you can run a short bonus encounter where the player characters used in this adventure ambush a group of Night Heralds who are transporting *The Last Theorem* to a safer location. The nature of this bonus encounter is left to you to design, as long as the PCs have a chance to recover the text. Necerion's survival, in this case, means he'll make a last stand against the PCs in "When the Stars Go Dark"—he doesn't need *The Last Theorem* to complete his plans, after all, and only wanted to secure it to prevent the PCs from using it against him.

WHEN THE STARS GO DARK

Ramlock's final act on Golarion was also his final act as a human being. With the *Veinstone Pendulum* swinging away in his workshop in the demiplane he called his Hallow, Ramlock abandoned his flawed pursuit of the White Axiom and stepped through a fleeting portal to the planet Aucturn. The magical transportation stripped his flesh from his bones as surely as his original mind quake stripped his reason and remorse from his intellect, and upon his arrival on Aucturn, he had already started to transform into something alien, hideous, and unique.

But what Ramlock hadn't anticipated was the time it would take him to complete this change; as long as Aucturn slumbered, so would he. In his seemingly endless dreams, Ramlock envisioned his triumphant return to Golarion—his mastery of Dominion knowledge complete—to take over a world now inhabited by terrors from beyond the stars.

WHERE AND WHEN

"When the Stars Go Dark" takes place in 4718 AR (the present) and begins as the PCs seek to master the mysteries of the White Axiom. The events of all prior Adventure Paths, with the exception of the two most recent ones, are assumed to have taken place already, but none of the events in those campaigns directly affect the events of this chapter.

Every 56 years, Aucturn and Golarion entered their conjunction and the *Veinstone Pendulum* continued to build its charge toward the year 4718 AR. And every 56 years, Ramlock stirred for a short time from his slumber to gaze upon a single point of light in Aucturn's endless night—distant Golarion.

With the discovery of the *countdown clocks*, the Night Heralds have learned of Ramlock's imminent return and of the devastating conjunction that will occur, merging Aucturn and Golarion and allowing Dominion forces stationed on that distant planet to invade the world and harvest brains on a massive scale. The Night Heralds believe that those of their number who carry *countdown clocks* not only will be spared from this harvest but will be welcomed into the Dominion as allies in reward for helping to keep the invasion on schedule.

But what the Night Heralds don't know about the countdown is that this chain of events was in fact set in motion not to enable a Dominion invasion, but to awaken the Great Old One Aucturn and establish the planet-sized demigod's new place in the universe. Through it all, the Outer God Nyarlathotep watches and waits, ever amused as humanity scurries about on yet another planet to craft the architecture of its own destruction.

GETTING STARTED

As the PCs prepare for this final mission, their old friend and mentor Keleri Deverin briefs them. Take this chance to review the findings the PCs discovered within Ramlock's Tower at the end of "The Mirrored Moon." The date of the final conjunction with Aucturn, Golarion's "Doomsday Dawn," occurs 11 minutes after sunrise on the 5th day of the 6th month of the year—a date that is but 1 week away. Time grows short, but before they can act, the PCs must use the White Axiom to awaken the true potential of *The Last Theorem*, and, in so doing, discover what can be done to stop the end of the world.

THE LAST THEOREM — ITEM 20

Artifact | Divination | Evil | Occult

Method of Use held, 1 hand; **Bulk** 1

Without the power of the White Axiom, *The Last Theorem* is little more than an in-depth treatise on the nature of the Dark Tapestry and its inhabitants. Though written in Ancient Osiriani, the hieroglyphs on the page swim and shift. Before you can hope to use *The Last Theorem* as a resource, you must spend an hour studying the text and succeed at a DC 30 Occultism check to interpret the fluctuating hieroglyphs. After this attunement, you can use *The Last Theorem* as an aid when attempting Arcana, Lore, or Occultism checks associated with astronomy or the Dark Tapestry, gaining a +4 circumstance bonus on those checks as long as you have *The Last Theorem* held in hand. If you ever critically fail an Arcana, Lore, or Occultism check that was modified in this way, though, fragments of disturbing lore from *The Last Theorem's* pages seep momentarily into your mind, causing you to become frightened 4.

The Last Theorem can be permanently invested using the White Axiom. The process and its benefits are described on page 87.

As an artifact, *The Last Theorem* cannot be harmed by most effects. To destroy the text, a character who has mastered the White Axiom and has invested in *The Last Theorem* must use a *wish* to erase the book's pages. Doing so forever reverts *The Last Theorem* to a nonmagical book, but also negates the power of the White Axiom entirely—as such, the PCs would do well to wait until the events of *Doomsday Dawn* are complete before destroying the one tool that can desynchronize the *countdown clocks* and the *Veinstone Pendulum*.

CREATING CHARACTERS

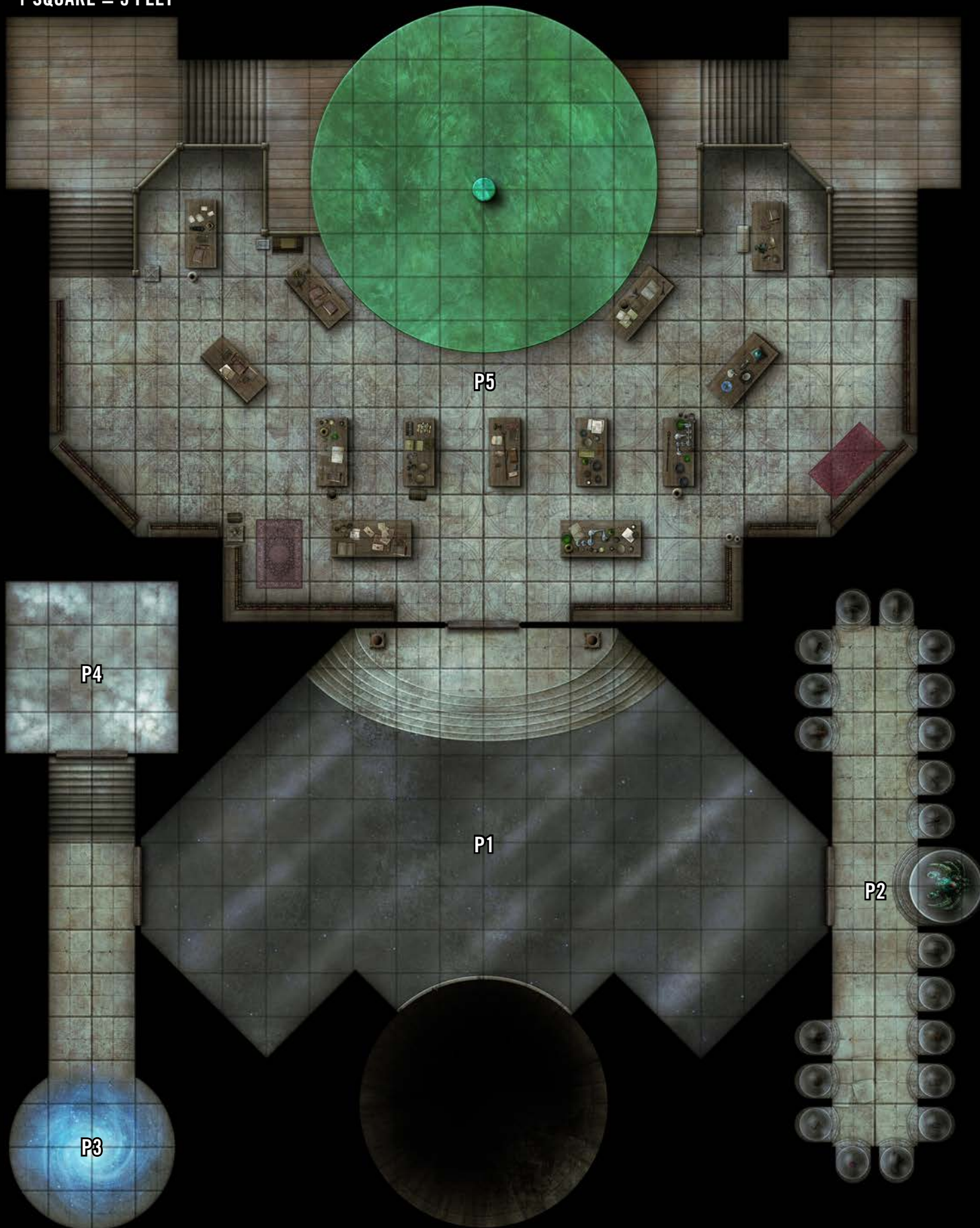
In *Doomsday Dawn's* final chapter, the players take on the roles of the adventure's primary characters one more time. At the chapter's outset, these PCs should be advanced to 17th level.

LEVELING UP

The players can make any choices they wish when leveling up from 9th level to 17th level.

PURCHASING GEAR

Players retain the gear they earned and kept from "The Mirrored Moon," but they also each gain the following: one 16th-level item, two 15th-level items, one 14th-level item, two 13th-level items, and 5,000 gp to spend on additional items. The PCs can pool their money to buy items.

P. RAMLOCK'S WORKSHOP
1 SQUARE = 5 FEET
P5
P4
P1
P2
P3

Event 1. Invoking the White Axiom — Severe 17

Keleri warns the PCs that the process of using the White Axiom to awaken *The Last Theorem*'s true potential is dangerous, as they must merge their minds with the artifact. This process works in the same way a character invests Resonance Points in any magic item, but the Resonance Point spent investing *The Last Theorem* is permanently expended. Unlike with most items, any number of characters can invest *The Last Theorem* at once, provided all have mastered the White Axiom (which all the PCs have). Keleri suggests the PCs invest the tome simultaneously so that when their minds merge with the text, they'll be able to aid each other against the dangers they'll face during the process.

When the PCs are ready to invest *The Last Theorem*, they do so using the normal rules to Invest an Item, but once the process begins, the world seems to fall away around them, plunging the PCs into a strange, featureless realm. The ground is solid, although appears to be made of parchment covered with shifting hieroglyphs that extend infinitely into the horizon. The sky above is that of a night sky with a single star that gives those who look upon it an eerie feeling of being watched from afar.

Creatures: *The Last Theorem* does not abide the White Axiom without resistance. Only a few seconds after the PCs arrive in this strange reality, manifestations of Ramlock's trapped intellect rise up in a last attempt to destroy the White Axiom. These malignant theorems appear as furious, towering giants, their flesh adorned with glowing hieroglyphs. These towering beings appear on the battlefield 60 feet away from the PCs and immediately move to attack. This combat plays out using the normal rules for battle, but there is no cover available in this otherwise empty realm, nor is there a way to escape via planar travel. Until the four malignant theorems are defeated, the White Axiom cannot be infused into the text. If the PCs are defeated, they awaken covered with sweat and shaking in the real world. They must wait 24 hours before trying again, in which case they face the four malignant theorems once more. If all four malignant theorems are slain and as long as at least one PC survives the fight, all of the PCs successfully invest *The Last Theorem*, gaining the benefits detailed in Revelations of the White Axiom below.

Wounds (and even deaths) suffered in this battle do not persist into the real world—this fight is purely a manifestation of the PCs' thoughts pushing against *The Last Theorem*.

Treat the malignant theorems as rune giants.

4 Malignant Theorems — Creature 16

Rune giants (*Pathfinder Playtest Bestiary*)
Initiative Perception +26

Revelations of the White Axiom

Once all four malignant theorems are defeated, the secrets of *The Last Theorem* are laid bare to the PCs. The White Axiom serves as a sort of guide to this lore, manifesting as a calm and serene version of pretransformation Ramlock. As the White Axiom spreads wide its metaphorical arms, three powerful visions are revealed to the PCs, each of which grants a powerful boon.

Revelation 1: Ramlock's Ruin

The PCs experience the horror and devastation of Ramlock's mind quake, and, in the span of a moment, experience Ramlock's entire imprisonment below the Desnan standing stones, during which he expunges and preserves his reason by carving the White Axiom into the cavern walls, forgetting the significance of his act as he finally completes it and emerges from his prison a pawn of the Dominion of the Black. The PCs then observe the bulk of Ramlock's life after he left his cell, murdered his kin, and then fled to the Moonmere. The vision

Playtest Goals

The primary playtest goals of "When the Stars Go Dark" are to learn whether the game still plays well at high level and to have fun! Do the rules for resolving combat get in the way of what should be an epic conclusion to the adventure? Are there so many options for player characters that fights get bogged down and become relentless slogs? Are the PCs too powerful against their foes, or are those foes impossible to defeat? With this edition of Pathfinder, we want to continue to make high-level play as enjoyable and as exciting as lower-level play—as it's at the upper levels that campaigns come to a close and your memories of the finale of a long-running campaign should focus on the nail-biting final battles and confrontations against truly deadly foes.

reveals his time spent there writing *The Last Theorem*, his journey to Osirion, and his eventual decision to abandon his search for the White Axiom in favor of shedding his humanity entirely.

Boon: The PCs know that the White Axiom was a manifestation of Ramlock's reason and humanity and that shards of these aspects of his personality are now invested in each of the PCs. This grants each character two ability score boosts. One of these boosts must be applied to a physical ability score, and one to a mental ability score.

Revelation 2: Ramlock's Hallow

The PCs see Ramlock create Ramlock's Hallow, followed by the creation of the Veinstone Pyramid as a monument above his workshop. Within this workshop, the PCs witness Ramlock's creation of the first *countdown clock*—the massive green *Veinstone Pendulum*. As Ramlock sets the pendulum in motion, the PCs know that it synchronizes to Aucturn, swinging back and forth in a slowly rotating pattern that will take 56 years to complete. The vision ends with Ramlock stepping through the portal and vanishing without a trace, leaving the *Veinstone Pendulum* behind.

Malignant Theorem

Boon: The PCs know now that the *Veinstone Pendulum* is the heart of a network of magical components that focus energies between Aucturn and Golarion so that once every 56 years, it can be used to create a portal between the two worlds. The PCs also understand that the pendulum functions as a magical capacitor and that after 111 cycles of 56 years accumulating power, it will expend the energy in a catastrophic event. In observing the creation of the *Veinstone Pendulum*, the PCs become infused with some of this power across time and space. This allows each PC the opportunity to reshape reality once, granting each character the ability to cast *wish* as an innate spell one time.

Revelation 3: Ramlock's Return

The PCs watch as the *Veinstone Pendulum* continues to count down. In a brief flash, they witness Necerion's involvement in the unfolding saga. You can use this moment to answer any questions the PCs might have about *Doomsday Dawn*'s plot to this point as you wish. The vision ends as the *Veinstone Pendulum* completes its 111th 56-year cycle and unleashes its built-up energies in a massive blast of energy that merges the two planets into one, allowing Aucturn to consume Golarion and awaken as a Great Old One. As Aucturn drifts away into the Dark Tapestry, the PCs see Ramlock, now a monstrous alien, return to a shattered and ruined Golarion to become its sole living occupant. The PCs realize that this horrific truth has escaped even the Night Heralds, who think that the countdown is merely presaging an invasion from the Dominion of the Black.

Boon: As the PCs witness Golarion's end and Aucturn's awakening, they also observe the destruction of the *Veinstone Pendulum*, caught at the heart of this devastating event. This reveals to the PCs minuscule faults and flaws in the *Veinstone Pendulum* that can be leveraged to desynchronize the countdown via a complex ritual. Performing this ritual in the presence of the *Veinstone Pendulum* will disperse its accumulated energies harmlessly and thus avert the doomsday, but doing so is certain to attract the attention of dangerous minds—likely even that of Ramlock himself!

RAMLOCK'S HALLOW

The PCs must now travel to the demiplane known as Ramlock's Hallow and use the desynchronization ritual on the *Veinstone Pendulum* to unravel the link between the two planets that has been building power over the course of many centuries.

While the entrance to Ramlock's Hallow is traditionally bound to a site in Osirion called the Valley of the Pyramids, the PCs' insights into *The Last Theorem* grant them the power to travel directly into the demiplane from any point on Golarion.

This adventure assumes that the PCs use *plane shift* to travel to Ramlock's Hallow. Normally, this requires the use of a planar tuning fork as a focus for the spell, but in this case, the White Axiom functions as this focus. If no PC can cast *plane shift*, Keleri can either provide a scroll of the spell for their use or call upon an ally (likely the cantankerous wizard Glorimandus) to cast the spell for them.

Information about Ramlock's Hallow is scarce, and as Ramlock created the demiplane after he wrote *The Last Theorem*, nothing in the pages of that book is of direct help. Any character can attempt a DC 38 Occultism check to Recall Knowledge they might have picked up over the years. On a success, the character knows that the Veinstone Pyramid located in the Valley of the Pyramids in Osirion was once hidden at the center of Ramlock's Hallow, and that the Hallow is a relatively small demiplane that consists of a haunted desert in an eternal twilight. On a critical success, the character knows that time in the Hallow passes much more slowly than on Golarion—for every 11 weeks that pass on Golarion, 56 years pass in Ramlock's Hallow, which translates to 2,920 days passing in the Hallow for every 1 day that passes on Golarion. Thus, once the PCs get into the Hallow, they should have plenty of time to accomplish their goal.

Arriving in the Hallow

> This place appears as a desert at twilight, its dunes stretching off in every direction under a softly blowing breeze. The twilit skies are empty of moon and stars—only one dim point of light glitters far above, and to look upon it gives the eerie conviction that the "star" above might be looking back.

Ramlock's Hallow is an eerie desert realm, circular in shape with a diameter of 11 miles. A total of 56 equally spaced veinstone steles mark its circumference. One who looks between the steles sees only the sands of the desert extending into the distance, but when something passes between two steles, it emerges back into the demiplane on the exact opposite side.

The Hallow's desert sands rise and fall in dunes that radiate outward from the center in irregular waves, and a soft breeze always blows outward from the demiplane's heart, curling back up into the sky above before recycling back down in gentle currents. There are no other weather patterns in the Hallow, and the sky is locked forever in twilight, with a single faint "star" shining far above. This star is actually the distant planet Aucturn, the only celestial body whose reflected light shines in the Hallow; a PC can determine this with a successful DC 30 Occultism check. The dim lighting that infuses the Hallow has no apparent source, as the sky's single star is far too dim to provide any real illumination. The boundaries of the Hallow extend upward for 1 mile. Anyone who flies beyond this point feels gravity shift as the star above winks out, only to appear to manifest below as the flying creature warps back to reenter the Hallow flying downward toward the ground 1 mile below.

Only one structure has traditionally stood within the Hallow: the Veinstone Pyramid. Once located at the center of the demiplane, this 556-foot-tall structure was transposed to the Valley of the Pyramids in Osirion about a decade ago by a party of adventurers who gained control of the *Funeral Mask of the Four Pharaohs*. There, the pyramid has stood to this day. What remained behind in Ramlock's Hallow was a massive foundation of veinstone, at the center of which gapes a pit surrounded by a set of standing stones. This is the entrance to Ramlock's workshop, and as the only feature of note in the demiplane, it should be an obvious target for the PCs.

When the PCs arrive in Ramlock's Hallow, they do so within sight of this plaza, so their goal is at once apparent.

Ramlock's Hallow Planar Traits

The demiplane of Ramlock's Hallow has the following planar traits (see *Pathfinder RPG Planar Adventures* for a full description of these traits, but for the purposes of this playtest, Ramlock's Hallow is treated the same as the Material Plane in all aspects).

Gravity normal

Time flowing (Every 11 weeks that pass on Golarion, 56 years pass in Ramlock's Hallow; thus, over the course of 1 year on Golarion, just over 264 years pass in the Hallow.)

Realm unbounded (The demiplane's borders warp in on themselves, so a person who travels in a straight line will eventually return to where they started their journey)

Structural lasting

Essence mixed

Alignment mildly neutral

Magic normal

O. The Veinstone Plaza — Severe 17

> The desert sands give way to a strange plaza of smooth green stone. The ever-present breeze seems to be blowing out from the plaza's center, keeping the sands of the encroaching desert out. At the stone's center, amid a ring of softly glowing green standing stones, yawns a circular pit—the apparent source of the strange breeze.

The Veinstone Plaza measures 750 feet in diameter—the exact width of the Veinstone Pyramid that once stood atop this slab of strange rock. The standing stones surrounding the central pit are made of veinstone as well, and they flicker with soft radiance. On closer inspection,

these glowing flames emerge from shifting hieroglyphs that glimmer inside each stone.

The pit the stones encircle is 30 feet in diameter and staggeringly deep, dropping down a mile through solid veinstone. The pit walls are glassy smooth, necessitating a successful DC 43 Athletics check to scale them. A character brave or foolish enough to simply leap into the pit makes an eerie discovery—after about 20 seconds of falling, gravity shifts and adjusts so that by the time the PC reaches the bottom of the shaft, they feel as if they've actually risen to the shaft's apex. An opening in the wall 20 feet from the shaft's terminus leads to area **P1** of Ramlock's workshop, and as gravity shifts once more, the character is deposited gently on the ledge to area **P1**.

The first time the PCs approach the Veinstone Plaza, they are greeted by a sinister figure standing on nothing but air over the pit. Humanoid in shape but 10 feet tall, the figure is dressed in a pale-gray hooded

The Ashen Man

cloak that completely obscures his features and is caked with ashes; only his weirdly slender, crimson-skinned arms are visible. The figure holds a gnarled staff, the tip of which branches into a tangle of twisted protrusions draped with a pulsing network of veins and unrecognizable, glistening organs. This creature is a powerful manifestation of chaos known as a hundun, an incarnation of entropy and agent of destruction in league with the grim god Nyarlathotep.

Known as the Ashen Man, he has long been intrigued by the apocalypse set in motion by Ramlock. Sensing across time and space that heroes are coming to oppose the countdown, the Ashen Man has arrived to confront them. The ageless aberration knows that countless other doomsdays await Golarion, and wishes to take measure of those who would arise to preserve it for apocalypses yet to come.

As the PCs approach, the Ashen Man poses the following question with his telepathic voice.

> "And here are those who oppose opposition. Bringers of entropy to entropic events. Agents who seek to disrupt chaos and preserve reality. Who are you, mortal skins, who seek to stand against the inevitable?"

The Ashen Man waits patiently for an answer, accepting anything the PCs might have to say for themselves before asking each character in turn a single question. He is less concerned with their specific answers than he is with whether or not they accept the premise of his queries. You know your players by this point—do your best to ask each player the question that thematically ties best to their personality or the personality of their character, or that plays against it. If you have more than six players, use the following as models for designing additional questions of your own:

- "Why do you deserve to live?"
- "Why do you deserve to die?"
- "Why does Golarion deserve to live?"
- "Why does Golarion deserve to die?"
- "If the world is destined to die, who are you to stand in the way of fate?"
- "Why can you think and reason if, when all is said and done, it must all end in darkness?"

Provided the PCs play along with the premise of his query, the Ashen Man nods dispassionately at each PC's answer, muttering mild approvals such as, "It is interesting that you think so." PCs who reject a question—refuse to provide a reason why Golarion should perish, for example—receive a portion of his ire, and gain the frightened 1 condition as a result of his silent glare. This condition cannot be reduced for 24 hours, its counteract level is 10, and its DC is 40.

Once each PC has answered their question, the Ashen Man informs the party that they may now ask one question of him. Give the players a few moments to come up with their question, but when they ask the Ashen Man,

the enigmatic hundun does nothing for a few moments, as if pondering the question, before replying.

> "Most interesting, for this is the query you were destined to ask. Interesting that you see yourselves as opposing the inevitable dissolution of reality, yet you cannot ask a question you were not destined to speak. Your question is irrelevant. Destiny is irrelevant. The doom of Golarion is upon you. This is not a time for fate, but for action!"

With that, the Ashen Man vanishes in a swirl of darkness, his guttering rasps replaced by a scratching, mournful sound emerging from the depths of the pit.

A moment later, an immense, flabby talon reaches up over the pit as a stumbling mountain of madness crawls up from below. This star-spawn of Cthulhu knows little of how it came to be in Ramlock's Hallow other than that the PCs are the cause, and it attacks at once, fighting them to the death.

In any event, the Ashen Man does not return to Ramlock's Hallow, his interest in the unfolding events sated. No statistics for the Ashen Man are provided, as he is not meant to be fought. What plans the Ashen Man may have for Golarion if the world survives the Doomsday Dawn remain to be seen, but the Ashen Man shall, in time, most assuredly return.

1 STAR-SPAWN OF CTHULHU — CREATURE 20

Pathfinder Playtest Bestiary
Initiative Perception +35

RAMLOCK'S WORKSHOP

Ramlock's Workshop is a relatively simple complex centered around a single huge laboratory.

P1. Darkness between the Stars — Low 17

> The walls, floor, and ceiling of this room are made of polished black stone and decorated with points of light. Opposite the entry shaft, the room drops away in a series of curving terraces leading to a fifteen-foot-tall double door. Two double doors half this size lead out of the other sides of this room and are the only features in the room that break the impression of standing alone in the vastness of outer space.

Should the characters study the walls of this room and succeed at a DC 26 Perception check, they can determine that the stars match the night sky as viewed from Golarion's surface but with roughly two-thirds of the stars missing. On a critical success, the observer notes that while the points of light are moving about as if sped up, one dim spot of light just above the doors to area **P4** remains motionless—a point of light that would correspond in the night sky to the planet Aucturn. As the countdown to doomsday continues, the stars continue to vanish from the wall one at a time at an increasing pace. By the time the PCs begin the ritual in **Event 1**, all stars but Aucturn have vanished from these walls.

One of Ramlock's most dangerous guardians still stands vigil in this chamber: a shoggoth that he forced into eternal servitude. The shoggoth has spread itself thin across the walls, its black protoplasmic matter as smooth and dark as the spaces between the stars. Eternally patient, the shoggoth waits for any creature to enter the chamber without openly carrying a *countdown clock*. If even one creature enters this room without such a device held in plain view, the shoggoth begins shrieking and howling as it slides off the walls to attack.

SHOGGOTH — CREATURE 18

Pathfinder Playtest Bestiary
Initiative Perception +30

P2. Dominion Repository

> A hideous crab-like monstrosity stands in a wide alcove directly opposite the doors to this ten-foot-wide hallway—some sort of well-preserved alien creature. The walls contain numerous other alcoves, each containing another strange alien creature or mysterious item.

As Ramlock pursued his goals, he often found items or creatures of import to his research. Once he'd finished studying these significant finds, he preserved them and placed them here to form a sort of trophy hall or museum. The large crab-like creature in the central alcove is a dead but preserved brain collector. Other alien creatures and long-broken items of magical and technological nature are on display elsewhere in the alcoves, including a single *countdown clock*—a gemstone containing flashing hieroglyphs.

While Ramlock didn't leave any functional items here, he valued the contents as nostalgic treasures. A trap he placed here continues to function today, but it doesn't trigger unless someone attempts to steal any of the objects on display or damages one of the preserved alien bodies. If someone does trigger the trap, a facsimile of a mind quake tears through the thoughts of everyone in the workshop save those who are already agents of the Dominion of the Black (thus, the trap affects only the PCs, as long as they are all located in the complex, but no other inhabitants). Characters with the mind quake background receive a +2 circumstance bonus to the save.

MIND QUAKE — HAZARD 19

Enchantment, Magical, Mental, Trap

Stealth DC 45 (trained) or *detect magic*
Description A collection of objects and preserved aliens that unleashes a devastating mental onslaught if disturbed.
Disable spell DC 39 (10th level) to dispel the trap before it triggers, or Thievery DC 40 (master) to disrupt the hidden lines of magical energy tied to the objects in the room

◈ **Mind Quake** (curse, mental, occult)

Trigger A creature attempts to move or damage an object or preserved alien's body.

Effect Each PC in the complex feels an overwhelming barrage of alien thoughts rip through their mind and must attempt a DC 39 Will save to resist them.

Success The character is stupefied 1 for 24 hours.

Critical Success No effect.

Failure The character is stupefied 2 for 24 hours and confused for 1 minute.

Critical Failure The character is stupefied 2 for 24 hours and confused permanently.

Reset The trap resets immediately and can be triggered again the next round if another object is meddled with.

P3. The Anywhere Vortex

Spinning in the center of this tall room is a churning vortex of tiny little motes of light.

This vortex of magical energy served Ramlock as a method of coming and going from the Hallow while the primary shaft was blocked by the Veinstone Pyramid above. Unfortunately, this vortex is now malfunctioning, and those who step into it are blasted with magical energy.

MALFUNCTIONING VORTEX — HAZARD 18

Environmental Magical

Stealth DC 10 or *detect magic*

Description A 5-foot-radius spiraling vortex of lights fills a 200-foot-tall shaft, pummeling those nearby and twisting those who come into contact with it.

Disable spell DC 36 (9th level) to dispel the trap before it triggers, or Survival DC 39 (master) to chart a path that avoids the vortex

◈ **Reality Distortion**

Trigger A creature comes into contact with the vortex.

Effect The triggering creature winks out of existence for a brief moment. An instant later, the vortex pulses with energy, dealing 20d6 force damage (DC 37 Reflex; half damage on a success, no damage on a critical success, double damage on a critical failure) to each creature in the hallway leading out of area **P3**.

This causes the vortex to vanish, and the triggering creature reappears in the center of the room. The triggering creature takes no damage, but becomes deformed, becoming permanently hampered 10 (DC 37 Fortitude; not hampered on a success, hampered 20 on a critical failure). This can be cured with *regenerate* or a similar, more powerful effect.

Reset The malfunctioning vortex reactivates after 1 minute.

P4. Ramlock's Palace

The walls, floor, and ceiling of this barren, ten-foot-high room shimmer softly with what appears to be a fine layer of gray mist.

This room served Ramlock as whatever he wished—the wizard could manipulate the room to manifest an effect similar to that of a level 10 *magnificent mansion* as he willed. A character can Identify the Magic of this room with a successful DC 38 Arcana check to discover the commands to activate this magical effect, potentially providing the PCs with a safe, comfortable place to rest and while they prepare for the ritual to desynchronize the *Veinstone Pendulum*.

P5. The Countdown Court — High 17

This sprawling chamber seems to combine the function of a library, an observatory, and a wizardly workshop into one. Several tables containing laboratory equipment and stacks of books lie throughout the room, while bookshelves heaped with tomes and scrolls compete with star charts hanging on the walls.

To either side opposite of the entrance, flights of stairs lead up to twin observation stages, while additional upraised walkways extend from each to flank a forty-foot-diameter disk of green stone, two feet thick, hovering a few feet off the ground, and slowly rotating. A shifting series of hieroglyphs flash along the disk's sides.

A pendulum made of the same green stone hangs from the ceiling directly above the disk on a chain made of green-stone links. This pendulum's bob is fashioned into what appears to be a swirling green vortex, and as it swings on slow, endless arcs back and forth over the stone, it makes a soft but disconcerting hum.

This chamber is where Ramlock did the majority of his work, but the focus of the chamber remains his final creation: the *Veinstone Pendulum*. Itself an artifact, the pendulum cannot be damaged, nor can its swings be interrupted. Any attempt to block the pendulum's motions simply causes that portion of the pendulum to grow immaterial and phase through the blockage while dealing 5d6 slashing damage to the object or creature in the way. The hieroglyphs along the sides of the disk are the same series of numbers counting down to doomsday.

When he first visited this chamber, Necerion realized at once that it held vast significance, but he had hoped to secure *The Last Theorem* for himself and spirit it away so it could never be used in conjunction with the White Axiom to undo the *countdown clocks*. After heroes slew one of his correspondents in the studies of the Dominion of the Black—a green dragon named Aeteperax—Necerion arranged for the dragon's resurrection. In return for being brought back to life, Aeteperax agreed to guard this chamber until just before time ran out, at which point the dragon intended to use a *scroll of plane shift* to flee Golarion before its destruction. What Aeteperax wasn't initially prepared for was just how long the wait would be. Ramlock's Hallow is disjointed from the flow of time as a result of the slow swings of the *Veinstone Pendulum*, and from the dragon's viewpoint, he's been standing guard here for over 800 years. While this has resulted in him

attaining much greater power than when he was initially resurrected, his stay in the workshop has driven him mad. He can no longer remember events more than 24 hours past, and so to Aeteperax, he's only been guarding the room for a day.

Aeteperax is accompanied in his guardianship by a group of three eerie aliens sent from the Dominion of the Black. The exact aliens posted here cycle through various types over the centuries, but the current representatives are a trio of 20-foot-tall half-machine, half-organic creatures known as deh-nolos. Aeteperax is delighted to have aliens from the Dominion to speak to, and each day the dragon wakes he carries on the same conversations he forgot from the previous day. The deh-nolos find the dragon's behavior amusing, and have themselves been considering the wisdom of harvesting Aeteperax's brain to study its flaws and deficiencies further once the countdown concludes.

In any event, the dragon and the three aliens have little interest in conversing with the PCs. They attack intruders at once, defending the *Veinstone Pendulum* with their lives.

AETEPERAX — CREATURE 18

Ancient green dragon (*Pathfinder Playtest Bestiary*) with elite adjustments (*Pathfinder Playtest Bestiary*) and custom spell list

Initiative Perception +32

Arcane Prepared Spells DC 37, attack +32; **8th** *dispel magic, horrid wilting, polar ray*; **7th** *chain lightning, prismatic spray, spell turning*; **6th** *dominate, flesh to stone, true seeing*; **5th** *cloudkill* (2), *teleport*; **4th** *dimension door* (2), *freedom of movement*; **3rd** *haste, mind reading, slow*; **2nd** *mirror image, see invisibility, touch of idiocy*; **1st** *grease, ray of enfeeblement* (2); **Cantrips** *detect magic, light, mage hand, message, read aura*

3 DEH-NOLOS — CREATURE 14

Pathfinder Playtest Bestiary

Initiative Perception +24

Aeteperax brought his hoard with him, and the treasures held here are significant. Most of the collection consists of coins, gems, and art objects worth a total of 25,000 gp, but the stash also contains a *scroll of plane shift*, a dozen *true healing potions*, and additional magic items of use to the party. Before running this adventure, you should populate Aeteperax's hoard with one 18th-level item custom-placed for each player character in your group.

Event 2. Desynchronization Ritual — Extreme 16

Once Aeteperax and the deh-nolos are defeated, the ritual to desynchronize the *Veinstone Pendulum* pounds in each PC's mind—the power of the White Axiom is eager to escape.

The ritual is simple; the White Axiom does most of the work. But despite its simplicity, the ritual takes time to complete. The PCs know that they must each stand atop the central disk of the *Veinstone Pendulum* and then focus their minds (and thus the White Axiom) on desynchronizing the pendulum from all of the other *countdown clocks*.

VEINSTONE PENDULUM — HAZARD 17

Complex Magic Trap

Stealth +0 (trained) or *detect magic*

Description A great pendulum ticks out a metronomic beat to Golarion's doom.

Disable reach the necessary level of Axiom Points via the desynchronization ritual (see sidebar on page 94)

Maintain Equilibrium (occult)

Trigger The PCs begin the desynchronization ritual.

Effect The pendulum rolls initiative and begins its routine.

Routine (1 action) The pendulum reduces the PCs' Axiom Points by 1 and makes a pendulum Strike against the PC that gained the most Axiom Points since its last turn (in the case of a tie, it Strikes the most recent PC to gain the Axiom Points)

Melee pendulum +30 (magical, reach 10 feet), **Damage** 5d6 slashing and distracting swing

Distracting Swing A creature hit by the pendulum takes a –4 conditional penalty to all checks to desynchronize the pendulum for 1 round.

Reset The trap resets if the PCs stop the ritual.

The *Veinstone Pendulum* has a threshold of Axiom Points equal to the number of PCs (including any slain or otherwise incapacitated characters). Each time the number of Axiom Points reaches a multiple of this Axiom Threshold, the pendulum reacts. For instance a party of four characters would reach Threshold ×1 at 4 Axiom Points and Threshold ×2 at 8.

Threshold ×1: The room shakes as a muted roar ripples across time and space.

Threshold ×2: The ceiling seems to explode outward (while the *Veinstone Pendulum* remains impossibly attached to nothingness above), revealing a night sky in which the stars are rapidly going out, one by one.

Threshold ×3: The link between Aucturn and Golarion flares to life. Strange mountains, spires of purple crystal, and alien structures seem to manifest on the horizon, as if the PCs were within a crater, looking out at the landscape. As the stars continue to wink out, a monstrosity crawls over the edge of the roof above to drop into the workshop. This is none other than Ramlock, wakened prematurely from his slumber and driven to a blind rage. Ramlock's appearance is little more than a distorted human head, the size of a wagon, held aloft by a tangle of jointed legs and slithering entrails that descend from his neck. His face, barely recognizable, leers up to the dying stars above. Ramlock attacks the PCs at once, fighting until slain.

Threshold ×4: The laws of gravity change and space folds, allowing characters to Stride in any direction and stand on the air without falling. The backlash from the desynchronization causes Ramlock to be slowed 1 for 1 round and suffer the effects of an organ rupture.

Threshold ×5: Ramlock senses the ritual's impending completion and magically claws his way into the

NECERION'S LAST STAND

"When the Stars Go Dark" assumes Necerion was defeated in the previous chapter and that the PCs claimed *The Last Theorem* as their own. If instead Necerion escaped death and took *The Last Theorem* with him, not all is lost. In this event, the PCs must first confront Necerion at the Valley of the Pyramids, either defeating him to take *The Last Theorem* from him or following in his footsteps to Ramlock's Hallow so they can continue on their quest.

In this event, the PCs will face a much more difficult fight in area **P5** in Ramlock's Hallow. They will face not only the green dragon Aeteperax and the three deh-nolos therein but also Necerion and two additional deh-nolos that accompany him.

DESYNCHRONIZATION RITUAL

To desynchronize the pendulum, the PCs must accumulate Axiom Points. Once per turn, each PC can focus their mind and perform one of the following activities. These activities produce a number of Axiom Points depending on the number of actions involved and the results of the PC's Perception or Occultism check.

◆◆◆ **Full Focus** Attempt a DC 33 Perception check or DC 28 Occultism check. Generate 1 Axiom Point on a success or 2 points on a critical success.

◆◆ **Partial Focus** Attempt a DC 38 Perception check or DC 35 Occultism check. Generate 1 Axiom Point on a success or 2 points on a critical success.

◆ **Distracted Focus** Attempt a DC 43 Perception check or DC 40 Occultism check. Generate 1 Axiom Point on a success or critical success. On a critical failure, reduce the number of Axiom Points by 1.

Other Methods of Desynchronization

The PCs might try some other creative methods to desynchronize the pendulum. The following methods have particularly potent effects.

Slaying Ramlock: If the PCs manage to kill Ramlock once he manifests in the workshop, his death automatically grants as many Axiom Points as the PCs need to fully desynchronize the pendulum.

Wish: Each casting of a *wish* spell (or a similar spell) automatically grants 3 Axiom Points.

desynchronization ritual as a move of desperation, focusing much of his energy on preventing the PCs from completing the ritual. Ramlock is slowed 1 and sick 1 as long as the ritual continues, suffers another organ rupture, and loses any *haste* effect. All DCs to desynchronize the pendulum increase by 2.

Threshold ×6: A blast of energy lances up along the *Veinstone Pendulum*, causing the device to detach from the ceiling and implode harmlessly. The ceiling above returns to normal, and if he still lives, Ramlock is shunted back to Aucturn, leaving the PCs in peace.

Once the ritual begins, the PCs are not ignored for long. If the shoggoth in area **P1** hasn't been slain, it immediately detaches from the walls there to roll forth into this room to attack.

When the pendulum is partially desynchronized, it wakens Ramlock and calls him forth from Aucturn, as described on page 93.

RAMLOCK — CREATURE 20

Aberration Chaotic Evil Huge

Perception +34, blindsense 120 feet, darkvision, *see invisibility*, *true seeing* (10th level)

Languages Aklo, Ancient Osiriani, Common, Draconic, Kellid; telepathy 100 feet, *tongues*

Skills +26; Arcana +37, Dominion of the Black Lore +37, Occultism +36, Religion +32, Society +36

Str +8, **Dex** +6, **Con** +7, **Int** +10, **Wis** –2, **Cha** +7

AC 43, **TAC** 40; **Fort** +31, **Ref** +29, **Will** +30, +2 conditional to all vs. arcane or occult spells

HP 365, fast healing 20; **Immunities** confused, disease, polymorph, possession; **Resistances** mental 10; **Weaknesses** organ rupture; *nondetection*

◇ **Contingency** Ramlock has a 7th-level *contingency* spell in effect.

Trigger An effect would entangle, hamper, immobilize, grab, or restrain Ramlock.

Effect Ramlock's *contingency* casts *freedom of movement* on Ramlock.

Mind Quake Aura (enchantment, mental, occult) aura 60 feet. When a creature enters the aura, it must attempt a DC 39 Will save. On a success, it becomes stupefied 1 for 24 hours (no effect on a critical success); on a failure, it becomes stupefied 2 for 24 hours and becomes confused for 1d6 rounds (or confused for 10 minutes on a critical failure). A creature that attempts a saving throw is bolstered against the effects of this aura.

Organ Rupture A creature that hits Ramlock with a critical hit that deals physical damage ruptures one of Ramlock's trailing organs. This causes him to take 2d6 persistent bleed damage and suppresses his fast healing until the bleeding ends.

Speed 40 feet, climb 40 feet, fly 30 feet (from the *fly* spell)

◆ **Melee** grotesque tendril +35 (reach 30 feet), **Damage** 4d10+16 bludgeoning plus adhesive

◆ **Ranged** Aucturn's glance +33 touch (death, range sight), **Damage** 5d6 cold plus 5d6 negative

Arcane Prepared Spells DC 41, attack +35; **10th** *time stop*; **9th** *power word kill* (2), *weird*; **8th** *dispel magic, maze, scintillating pattern*; **7th** *spell turning, warp mind* (2); **6th** *feeblemind, teleport, true seeing*; **5th** *black tentacles, crushing despair, false vision*; **4th** *dimension door, freedom of movement, resilient sphere*; **3rd** *haste, locate, paralyze*; **2nd** *blur, deafness, web*; **1st** *ray of enfeeblement, true strike* (2); **Cantrips** *confusion, detect magic, mage hand, message, read aura*

Occult Innate Spells DC 41, attack +35; **Constant** *fly, nondetection, see invisibility, tongues, true seeing*; **At Will** *nightmare, mind probe*

Rituals *commune, geas, legend lore, planar binding*

Adhesive A creature struck by Ramlock's tendril is automatically grabbed by it (DC 40 Acrobatics to Escape). Ramlock can have only one creature stuck to his tendril at a time. Ramlock can release a stuck creature or object with an action, and the adhesive dissolves 1d10 rounds after he dies.

◇ **Effortless Concentration**

Trigger Ramlock's turn begins.

Effect Ramlock gains the effects of a Concentrate on a Spell action to extend the duration of one of his active arcane prepared spells.

Steady Spellcasting Ramlock's spells are disrupted by reactions only if he takes 45 damage or more, even if the reaction normally disrupts manipulate actions automatically.

◇ **Superior Quickened Casting**

Frequency once per turn

Requirements Ramlock casts an arcane cantrip or arcane spell of 7th level or lower. The spell must require 2 or more spellcasting actions to cast.

Effect Ramlock chooses one of the spell's spellcasting actions. Ramlock doesn't need to take that action to finish casting the spell.

◆ **Tendril Slam**

Requirements Ramlock has a creature stuck to his tendril.

Effect Sweeping his tendril, Ramlock bashes the grabbed creature against a surface or another creature within reach of the tendril. The creature takes 4d10+20 bludgeoning damage if bashed against a surface, or it and the other creature each take 4d10+10 bludgeoning damage. Any creature damaged can attempt a DC 40 Reflex save for half damage (no damage on a critical success, double damage on a critical failure).

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

Once they have desynchronized the *Veinstone Pendulum* and either slain Ramlock or banished him back to the fringes of the solar system, the heroes have saved Golarion from a devastating doomsday. While their exploits are likely well known by many on Golarion, the true nature of the services they provided remain known to very few. The Esoteric Order of the Palatine Eye, of course, lauds the PCs with ceremony and amazing rewards, but as is their way, they keep these congratulatory accolades quiet and secretive. Less secretive about their reactions are the remaining Night Heralds. Forced to refocus and recalibrate their plans, the Night Heralds declare the Esoteric Order to be among their most hated enemies. If he still lives, Ramlock may well become a new leader for the Night Heralds and use the cult to find a way to travel to Golarion to seek revenge on the world he once called home and sought to rule. Only time will tell what lengths the need for revenge might push the Night Heralds to in their new plans. But now that the Aucturn Enigma has been solved, time is one thing Golarion has plenty of!

Ramlock

PATHFINDER
PLAYTEST
EVOLVE YOUR GAME!
AVAILABLE NOW!
paizo
Paizo, Paizo Inc., the Paizo golem logo, Pathfinder, and the Pathfinder logo are registered trademarks of Paizo Inc.; Pathfinder Roleplaying Game and Pathfinder Playtest are trademarks of Paizo Inc. © 2018, Paizo Inc.
pathfinderplaytest.com

THICKETFELL
1 HEX = 12 MILES
J
K
H
F
E
G
M
N
I
L

THE FINAL COUNTDOWN

Mysterious ancient artifacts from sand-choked Osirion count down the years until a rare planetary conjunction that will align Pathfinder's world of Golarion with the hostile planet Aucturn, allowing the ravenous hordes of the Dominion of the Black to surge forth and harvest the brains of the Inner Sea, remaking the world in their terrible, alien image. *Doomsday Dawn* takes the heroes on a decade-long journey throughout Golarion as they attempt to understand and defeat the otherworldly menace and avoid utter catastrophe. This collection of seven multi-encounter scenarios is designed to introduce the Pathfinder Playtest rules in a guided, shared playtest experience coinciding with regular surveys and feedback from players like you!

paizo.com/pathfinderplaytest

ISBN 978-1-64078-087-3
US $24.99
52499>
9 781640 780873
Printed in Canada. PZO2100-M